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ENGLAND AND NAPOLEON III

*A Study of the Rise of a Utopian Dictator*







From Blanchard Jerrold's *The Life of Napoleon III* (Longmans)

**Louis Napoleon in 1839**

# ENGLAND AND NAPOLEON III

*A Study of the Rise of a Utopian Dictator*

By

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To  
PROFESSOR HERBERT EUGENE BOLTON

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## Preface

### A Tale of Two Countries

AS A POLITICAL EXILE, Louis Napoleon, destined to become the third but not the third-rate Emperor Napoleon, sojourned comfortably for a number of years among the English people. During that time he mingled amiably in their society, rubbing elbows with the blue-blooded aristocrats as well as with the middle-class tradesmen; met their political and intellectual luminaries; adopted their customs and—to a degree—their point of view; and, most important of all, courted and won their friendship. While in refugee “retirement” he had intelligently scrutinized the career of his illustrious uncle; in his consequent determination to avoid Bonaparte’s errors and to capitalize on the Corsican’s successes, he early reached the conclusion that one of the greatest mistakes of Napoleon I was his blind hatred of the British, the despicable “nation of shopkeepers.” Thus instructed by reference to the avuncular precedent, the young nephew saw the importance of British approval and planned to make a policy of

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friendship with the Island Kingdom a sturdy plank in the ship of state he envisaged for the future.

Though at first they did not take him too seriously, the majority of the British people, especially those of the upper classes, were genuinely, though indulgently, fond of Louis Napoleon. His rise to power in the presidential election of 1848 was regarded with favor by most Englishmen, especially those representative of the middle class, and their approval more than outweighed the uneasy hostility of some British leaders and the mouthings of some newspapers too prone to see in Louis Napoleon an ambitious Bonaparte eager to assume the mantle of the Great One. The friendly disposed firmly believed that his presidency stood for the re-establishment of strong government and the restoration of law and order; they saw him as the inspiration of French economic recovery and the opponent of the socialist menace; and they fondly hoped that an overturned European balance of power would not come through a restored Napoleonic Empire.

Despite numerous criticisms of the Bonapartist president's attempts to weaken constitutional government in France, the British government and businessmen, apprehensive of radicalism, seemed willing to regard these political indiscretions with an indulgent eye. A general decline of industry and commerce in the spring and summer of 1851 was attributed to social unrest in France, and British businessmen thought the advent of a new—and apparently forceful—leader

would prove both a sedative and a panacea. Consequently, when Louis Napoleon in December of 1851 boosted himself to the verge of total dictatorship on the backs of political and military henchmen as unscrupulous and as ambitious as he, the British, with few exceptions, welcomed the change.

The British government, however, evinced some skepticism of a man who could promise all things to all men. When, for instance, he truculently demanded the expulsion of French socialist, anarchist, and extreme republican refugees from their haven in Switzerland and Belgium, the British concluded that his antiradical measures masked an attempt to further imperialist intentions. To keep the record straight, then, Downing Street reminded the Prince-President that any unilateral attempt by France to alter the settlements of Vienna would find no favor in London. The refugee matter suddenly became more or less a dead issue in the mind of the astute Louis Napoleon. His apparently amenable attitude soon paid dividends.

On the promise not to change the balance of power in Europe, Louis Napoleon obtained England's recognition of the Second Empire. With Albion's approval of his assumption of the imperial purple, he could scornfully ignore the bitter opposition of the Northern Courts (Prussia, Russia, and Austria) to his entrance into the ranks of European royalty.

England's *quid pro quo* was also shortly forthcoming. In the diplomatic field she obtained French

collaboration in the Near Eastern question. In the economic sphere, she induced Louis Napoleon to abandon the protective system and to establish freer trade. The elimination of high tariffs on the Continent had long been a fond hope on the part of an England convinced by Cobden and his kind that free trade was to her best interests. Napoleon III's active support of the principle on the Continent sparked other countries to do likewise, with the result that England, during the sixties, was enabled to flood the important markets of Europe with her goods and to underwrite financially the most prosperous decade of the mid-Victorian period. "Buttered up" by the incoming gold, the British commercial classes were kindly oblivious of Napoleon III's schemes and dreams of utopian dictatorship.

France, however, enjoyed only superficial progress as a result of Louis Napoleon's utopian policies of full production, freer trade, and social reform. Railroads were built; Paris was flattered by the modernizing activities of the Emperor's engineers; the territorial expansion of the Empire was gratifying; and the opposition of the *faubourgs* was partially eliminated by greater job-opportunity and charity. But this synthetic prosperity came high for Frenchmen. Political liberty was almost a dimly remembered blessing; prices and taxes were high; the balance of trade was unfavorable; and industry was made painfully aware of British competition. Part of the difficulty was removed by the Emperor when he consented to the liberalization of

the Empire, but it was a step which came much too late. The Franco-Prussian War ripped into shreds the artificial fabric of Empire, revealing disunity and military weakness behind the façade of this Bonapartist-utopian creation. British approval had not brought British support.

That fatal turn of the wheel of fortune which ended the Second Empire took Louis Napoleon down and out of France, to exile and oblivion, beyond hope of recovering his position. Yet he left a heritage from which arose that "practical democracy," the Third Republic, which, in its turn, found death at the hands of a dictator from across the Rhine.

This monograph is but the beginning of a study, based upon original Anglo-French materials, of the rise and fall of the Second Empire, not in the form of a political drama with flamboyant actors, exciting episodes, and bizarre settings, but rather as a documentary film revealing the interplay of forces, commercial, ideological, and sociological, which affected two important powers.

By great good fortune, the author was able to begin his researches in the libraries and archives of England and France before the outbreak of World War II. At that time he had finished his investigation of the period covered by this volume, and the documents he collected, together with the publication of a number of excellent monographs on various phases of the subject, have enabled him to complete the work through the establish-

ment of the Second Empire.<sup>1</sup> A subsequent volume on England and the Second Empire will have to await times more propitious for travel and research.

The author wishes to express his gratitude for the encouragement and valuable suggestions given him in the preparation of this book by Professor Herbert E. Bolton (University of California), Professor Allan Nevins (Columbia University), Dr. David L. Dowd (University of Nebraska), Dr. Richard J. Hostetter (University of Arkansas), Dr. Ted Gordon (Los Angeles), and Mrs. Amie H. Abbot (Berkeley). Acknowledgment is also due the Institute of the Social Sciences (University of California) for financial grants that facilitated the writer's research in England and France.

<sup>1</sup> See "Bibliographical Note," pp. 175 ff.



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ENGLAND AND NAPOLEON III

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## An Exile in England

FEW EXILES IN HISTORY have nurtured regal ambitions so fondly as did Louis Napoleon, nephew of the First Bonaparte; few exiles in history have realized—for a time—such imperial attainments. Yet, on the eve of realization, less of hope lay ahead than ignominy behind, an ignominy intensified by the glaring contrast with the career of his long-dead uncle.

Few were the expatriates who had the responsibility of supporting the prestige of a family name like his. "Napoleon" was still, to millions, the vision and the glory; but the unfortunate legatee had spent his time for years looking out upon the world with an aggrieved air because he bore a name to forget which a tired old Europe had tried hard—and failed. For years he had worn his great title like an ill-fitting garment, trying to reconcile the inhospitality of his native France with his position as the nephew of the man who had given her history an undying luster.

Always this Bonaparte had one objective in view: to become a bona fide Bonaparte by re-establishing the

prestige of France in the grand manner of his eminent kinsman. To call the attention of France's common people to his own interest in their welfare, he had espoused the nascent liberalism of the Italian patriots; and he had actually surpassed himself in writing of the virtues of French nationalism, of universal suffrage, and of the liberal empire. He was even to wander into the labyrinth of socialist dialectics and to come out with a literary gem dripping with vision, which he was to give the euphemistic title *The Extinction of Pauperism*, a work whose chief virtue lay in its concealment of the sheer opportunism which had motivated its composition.

Unlike his famous uncle, Louis Napoleon was an excellent politician. He was everything to all men—including Englishmen. Knowing that his ambitious ancestor had failed to subdue the British lion by force of arms, he determined to tame the powerful brute by some other method. For four years (1838-40; 1846-48) Louis Napoleon lived among the British as an exile. As a pretender to the French throne he was welcomed by "the best" people in England. At dinners, theaters, and operas, he mixed with the élite and soon was on intimate terms with numerous Victorians such as Benjamin Disraeli, Sir Henry Bulwer, Lord Londonderry, and Lord Malmesbury. A frequent visitor at Gore House, which was owned by Lady Blessington and was considered the social center of London's fashionable set, he hobnobbed with Dickens, Thackeray, and many other literary celebrities. And his presence

was always noted, for, wrote Charles Sumner in 1840, "Lady Blessington is as pleasant and time-defying as ever, surrounded till one or two in the morning with the brilliant circle . . . . Prince Napoleon is always there . . . ." <sup>1</sup> Astutely, he became on cordial terms with those who trod Threadneedle Street; during a visit to the Bank of England, for instance, Louis Napoleon was shown around the building by the Governor of that powerful institution and was entertained at a breakfast given by the Board of Directors. <sup>2</sup>

Though most Englishmen liked this quiet, reticent French exile, few took his pretensions seriously. Rather, they were inclined to regard him as an inane dreamer. A few, including the Duke of Wellington, were even amazed when he assured them that he really believed that some day he would rule over the French people. <sup>3</sup> That Louis Napoleon took himself seriously there can be no doubt. He was convinced that he was another man of destiny. The imperial eagle was painted on the panel of his carriage door; notices were sent to various London newspapers regarding his movements; and articles were printed in the *Times* concerning his activities. <sup>4</sup> Like his uncle, he knew the value of publicity; accordingly, he kept his name before the British public.

<sup>1</sup> William Teignmouth Shore, *D'Orsay; or the Complete Dandy* (London, 1911), p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Blanchard Jerrold, *The Life of Napoleon III, Derived from State Records, from Unpublished Family Correspondence, and from Personal Testimony* (London, 1874-1882), II, 83.

<sup>3</sup> Graham Brooks, *Napoleon III* (New York, 1933), pp. 28-29.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Sencourt [Robert Esmonde Gordon George], *Napoleon III, the Modern Emperor* (New York, 1933), p. 70.



Aroused by the growing popularity of Louis Napoleon, the French government instructed its ambassador to request the British to restrict the exile's freedom of action. In reply, the British minister, Lord Malbourne, told the French ambassador that no law existed in England which would restrict the individual's right of asylum.<sup>5</sup> This incident served only to strengthen the young pretender's friendship for the British.

Wherever Louis Napoleon went, he was welcome. In 1839 he visited the manufacturing centers of England, where he took notes on almost everything he saw. During his trip to Manchester he attended an industrial exhibition being held in the Mechanics' Institute.<sup>6</sup> At Leamington he visited the various points of interest and was entertained at Warwick Castle by the Lord-Lieutenant. As a result of these trips Louis Napoleon became acquainted with the various aspects of British economic and social life. Influenced perhaps by the squalid conditions of the masses which he observed in the industrial centers of England, he began the formulation of a program of social reforms which later on he tried to carry out in France. Meanwhile his visits served to increase his popularity among the British. The *Courier* mentioned the interest of Englishmen in Louis Napoleon and concluded by stating: "He is daily expected in London as he is desirous of being

<sup>5</sup> Jerrold, *op. cit.*, II, 84.

<sup>6</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, Jan. 30, 1939, as cited by F. H. Cheetham, *Louis Napoleon and the Genesis of the Second Empire, Being a Life of the Emperor Napoleon III to the Time of His Election to the Presidency of the Republic* (London, 1909), p. 161.

present at the opening of Parliament.”<sup>7</sup> All patriotic Englishmen grunted their approval of the pretender’s desire.

Louis Napoleon coveted the friendship of the British people. He did not want them to look upon him as the successor of a conqueror and a dictator; he preferred to have them regard him as the heir of the revolutionary program: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Some day destiny would enable him to establish a liberal Empire, but to attain this objective he knew that, in addition to destiny, he must have the support of the British ruling classes.

Louis Napoleon’s residence in England was not entirely devoted to trips and social activities. In July, 1839, he published a very revealing document entitled *Napoleonic Ideas*.<sup>8</sup> In this bit of propaganda he first defended the program of his uncle by maintaining that Napoleon I had created the perfect balance between order and liberty by instituting universal suffrage under a single authority. But Louis Napoleon did not stop with this misleading interpretation of the First Empire. Moved, perhaps, by the unfortunate social conditions which he had seen in England and which he knew existed also in France, he actually portrayed his uncle as the harbinger of economic prosperity and social reform. Napoleon I, wrote the ambitious nephew, had been tremendously interested in the com-

<sup>7</sup> As quoted by Jerrold, *op. cit.*, II, 86.

<sup>8</sup> Louis Napoleon, *Oeuvres de Napoléon III* (Paris, 1854-69), I, 15-233.

mercial, industrial, and agricultural development of France. True, numerous wars prevented Bonaparte from carrying out a positive social and economic program; but compare what he did during the consulate with what his successors have done during many years of peace. Have they opened new markets for commerce? Have they bettered the lot of the poor? Have they used the revenues of France with the single purpose of achieving prosperity? Have they lowered taxes? No!<sup>9</sup>

Curiously this "political" treatise was so well timed that it greatly enhanced the reputation of its author. In 1839-40 the Industrial Revolution was bringing about much social unrest among the middle classes and among the wage earners. Various reforms were demanded by radicals, and as a result Louis Napoleon's discussion of economic and social problems coincided with a great public appetite for change. Numerous editions of his work were printed; it was translated into the German, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese languages; and over 500,000 copies were sold in France alone. When the "young pretender" heard that the French government was very much disturbed by his publication, he realized that the classical Napoleonic symphony at last had been the source of a popular modern theme song. Henceforth Europe was to become enamored of the intriguing refrain of "peace, prosperity, and social reform." Especially hyp-

<sup>9</sup> Hendrick Nicolaas Boon, *Rêve et réalité dans l'oeuvre économique et sociale de Napoléon III* (La Haye, 1936), pp. 17-18.

notic it was in soothing the jittery, restless, and radical elements in revolutionary France. Conservative souls in England soon began to hum the tune. Peace and prosperity for France, England's most important customer, they sang, and some of them readily agreed with Lord Bulwer when he declared: "Prince Louis Napoleon has qualities that may render him a remarkable man if he ever returns to France."<sup>10</sup>

Louis Napoleon was on the march. Publication in France (1840) of a pamphlet by Persigny, an ardent Bonapartist, kept him in the public eye. In these *Lettres de Londres*, the author described in flattering terms what he had heard and seen of the pretender in London. Encouraged, perhaps, by this propaganda, Louis Napoleon became more garrulous about his political ambitions and plans; nevertheless, most of his British friends still refused to take him seriously and found him a trifle dull. One shrewd politician, Disraeli, discerned correctly the earnestness of the pretender's ambitions, for in *Endymion* he wrote: "The world thought he [Louis Napoleon] had fitted up his fine house, and bought his fine horses, merely for enjoyment of life. His purposes were very different."<sup>11</sup>

In 1840 Louis Napoleon determined to take advantage of the growing Bonapartist sentiment and make a second attempt to overthrow the unpopular

<sup>10</sup> Cheetham, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, *Endymion* (New York, 1880), p. 246. In this work Louis Napoleon plays the role of Prince Florestan. Disraeli clearly grasped the motives behind the pretender's visit to London during 1838-40.

July monarchy. In his first *coup d'état* (1836) he had appeared at Strasbourg and called upon its garrison to help him re-establish the Napoleonic Empire. But he was quickly arrested and expatriated across the Atlantic to America. In this second attempt he led an expedition, consisting of "a handful of adventurers," across the Channel to Boulogne, announcing that the bones of his uncle that had been returned to France by order of King Louis Philippe should rest in a "regenerated" France. So certain was Louis Napoleon that his coup would be successful that before his departure he held a dinner party and invited his guests to dine with him a year from that date in the Tuileries. His invitation was accepted by a number of "hungry" speculators and bankers who were "interested" in Louis Napoleon's expedition and had chartered a steamboat for the invasion. But, again, the pretender experienced a humiliating defeat. Captured by the forces of Louis Philippe, this naïve troublemaker was sentenced to life imprisonment in the gloomy governmental fortress of Ham.

London was irritated at the fiasco, and many people decided that the Prince was only an irresponsible idiot. "Your Majesty will have probably seen by this time," wrote Lord Melbourne to Queen Victoria (August 7, 1840), "the report from your Majesty's consul at Boulogne of the mad attempt of Louis Bonaparte. It is rather unfortunate that it should have taken place at this moment, as the violent and excited temper of the French nation will certainly lead them to attribute it

to England.”<sup>12</sup> “Had Bonaparte been shot, it would have been the proper end of so mischievous a block-head,” asserted a correspondent of the *Times*,<sup>13</sup> while the *Examiner* thought that the ridicule of the attempt must destroy whatever chance the Prince might otherwise have had, and remarked that his bearing appeared as faulty as his discretion.<sup>14</sup>

This second failure did not discourage the child of the Napoleonic legend. Increase of opposition in France to the monarchy convinced him that his plan to re-establish the empire was merely delayed and that meanwhile he should advance his interests by masquerading in the garments of a liberal republican and a social reformer. Henceforth he expressed and wrote ideas that were democratic; often he uttered concepts that even seemed socialistic.<sup>15</sup> Moved by these liberal views, many gullible republicans decided that Louis Napoleon had joined their cause; and, when he declared that “he recognized the sovereignty of the people as the foundation of all political organization,” one enthusiastic French intellectual proclaimed that Louis was no longer a pretender, but a member of the republican party—“a soldier of our flag.”<sup>16</sup>

Gradually the liberalism of the famous prisoner

<sup>12</sup> Arthur Christopher Benson and Viscount Esher, eds., *The Letters of Queen Victoria, a Selection of Her Majesty's Correspondence between the Years 1837 and 1861* (1st series; London, 1907), I, 287; hereinafter cited as *The Letters of Queen Victoria*.

<sup>13</sup> Cheetham, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Boon, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Georges Duval, *Napoléon III, enfance-jeunesse* (Paris, n.d.), pp. 281-82, as quoted by Boon, *loc. cit.*



expanded until by 1844 it included many, many things. "Today, the object of all enlightened government," he wrote, "should tend by its efforts to hasten the period when men may exclaim: The triumph of Christianity has destroyed slavery; the triumph of the French revolution has put an end to bondage; the triumph of democratic ideas has caused the extinction of pauperism."<sup>17</sup> Thus in one short all-embracing paragraph Louis Napoleon stood forth as the champion of the church, of democracy, and of social reform. Every man was to be free, to exercise a vote, and to have a job. This was the Napoleonic utopia.

While advocating social as well as political reforms, Louis Napoleon from the beginning gave assurances that he was no extremist by expressing his opposition to "that socialism which suppressed liberty." At the same time he refused to become an exponent of the latter-day "rugged individualism," and frankly admitted that it was "the duty of the state to assist in public works and to aid whenever individual efforts failed."<sup>18</sup> This seductive idea he enlarged upon in his famous work *The Extinction of Pauperism*, which he wrote while a prisoner. In it he proposed to solve the problem of unemployment by establishing agricultural colonies to cultivate the wastelands of France. He also suggested that artisans, often forced to leave their trades for unskilled vocations, should be placed in their

<sup>17</sup> Louis Napoleon, *op. cit.*, II, 151.

<sup>18</sup> Ferdinand Dreyfus, *L'Assistance sous la Seconde République* (Paris, 1907), pp. 18-19.



particular trades, and he favored the formation of a kind of association, wherein all members would be assigned to employment in such branches of industry and agriculture as the directors considered most advantageous to the community.<sup>19</sup>

In advocating the establishment of agricultural colonies by the state, Louis Napoleon accepted the socialistic view that the government should intervene in the economic activities of the people and that tax money could be used to underwrite any plan to improve the condition of the worker.<sup>20</sup> He also admitted, as did the socialists, that social reforms would be of little value unless an organization to carry them out was created. Without some kind of association, said this psuedo disciple of Blanc, the workers would be helpless, and with one they would be everything.<sup>21</sup> Therefore in his proposal to extinguish poverty he set forth a plan whereby the workers would be organized. His scheme was essentially military in conception. Agricultural colonies were to be run by a hierarchy of officials, with titles equivalent to lieutenant, captain, and colonel.<sup>22</sup> He had little confidence in the ability of individual workers to co-operate in any general plan for mutual benefit and therefore favored their organization under military law. Under such strict discipline, he said, workers would be virtuous, healthy, and thrifty.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the clever politician bid for the support of the

<sup>19</sup> Louis Napoleon, *op. cit.*, II, 109-51.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 116.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 121.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 142.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 132.

proletariat by formulating a way to end poverty through regimentation.

Louis Napoleon also wrote a few pamphlets which appealed to the businessmen. In one he favored the ~~construction~~ of a canal in Nicaragua and the establishment of a French economic empire in Central America. In another he urged the development of the beet sugar industry in France, maintaining that it would not only contribute to the growth of French agriculture, but also bring industry to small towns. He even painted a beautiful word picture of wage earners growing beets in summer and working in local refineries in the winter.<sup>24</sup>

In his article on sugar beets Louis Napoleon briefly examined the tariff question, which he believed was closely connected with the labor problem. To create work for everyone, he wrote, should be the chief aim of a stable government. Now which policy, protection or free trade, would help a ruler to achieve this end? There is no doubt that the adoption of a free trade policy in England enabled that country to become a great industrial state. But, alas, stated this professional humanitarian, behold the misery and poverty of her workers and the terrible social conditions that exist in her cities. We must not permit these unfortunate conditions to develop in France.<sup>25</sup> No, we must maintain tariffs to protect our workers. When industry has reached that stage in its development wherein it can

<sup>24</sup> Louis Napoleon, *op. cit.*, II, 191-92.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 234-35.

furnish adequate employment to all wage earners, then tariffs can be eliminated.<sup>26</sup>

Louis Napoleon's economic and social proposals evoked diverse opinions. The famous French socialist, Louis Blanc, was very favorably impressed, while the French poet, Béranger, expressed his artistic emotions when he wrote:

It is good to know that in the midst of the cares and sufferings of your captivity, you think of the miseries of so great a part of your citizens. It is the most noble manner of occupying your moments, and also the most worthy of the name you bear. Thus you make your native sons feel repugnance in postponing longer your return to your country.<sup>27</sup>

Rugged individualists in early Victorian England, however, were not impressed by Louis Napoleon's ideas. To most of them, his views were repugnant to all sound principles of political economy as well as to the dictates of common sense.

Sudden political and social upheavals in France convinced Louis Napoleon that opportunity was about to knock at his door. In May, 1846, the approaching death of his father in Italy gave him the excuse to abandon his theoretical "studies" at the "University of Ham" and to re-enter the practical world. Unable to make satisfactory arrangements with the French government for a temporary leave, he donned the gar-

<sup>26</sup> Pierre Hachet-Souplet, *Louis Napoléon prisonnier au Fort de Ham. La Vérité sur l'évasion de 1846 (documents inédits)* (Paris [1894]), pp. 116-17.

<sup>27</sup> Gallix and Guy, *Histoire complète et authentique de Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte depuis sa naissance jusqu'à ce jour* (Paris, 1852), p. 165.

ments of a workingman and, with outside aid, "walked forth to freedom" and went to London, where he registered at the Brunswick Hotel under the name of the Count d'Arenenberg. On the day of his arrival he attended a reception at Gore House, where he told the story of his flight "in his usually un-French way without warmth or excitement."<sup>28</sup> Awaiting governmental permission to visit his father (which he never received), the Prince now resumed his pleasant social life in London, dividing his time between an attractive and wealthy patroness, Miss Howard, and England's élite. Everywhere he went he received a hearty welcome and was sincerely congratulated upon his escape.

British friendship warmed Louis Napoleon's heart. He knew that without it he could never hope to carry out his plans. "The English owe you a good turn for the harm they did your uncle," said his perspicacious flunky, Persigny. "They are sufficiently generous or sufficiently sensible to do that good turn, if it is in their interest to do so; look for your support among the English."<sup>29</sup>

While cultivating British favor, Louis Napoleon kept his eyes fixed on France, awaiting developments. He knew that he could never impose himself upon the French, but he felt confident that the turn of events would some day offer him the long-awaited opportunity to return to his native land and bring about the es-

<sup>28</sup> John Forster, *Walter Savage Landor: A Biography in Eight Books* (Boston, 1869), p. 599 n.

<sup>29</sup> Albert Dresden Vandam, *An Englishman in Paris* (3rd ed.; London, 1892), II, 48.

tablishment of a Bonapartist government. His sincere belief in his destiny now was shared by many Englishmen. "I [Louis Napoleon] am the child of destiny," wrote Disraeli in *Endymion*. "That destiny will again place me on the throne of my fathers."<sup>30</sup>

On February 22, 1848, there began in France the revolution that was to open the door for the triumphal entry of Louis Napoleon as the President of the French Republic. Rioting occurred in the streets of Paris. Republicans, socialists, intellectuals, legitimists, and a few Bonapartists joined hands in a successful attempt to overthrow the "do-nothing," "plutocratic" monarchy. After two days of street fights the first phase of the revolution was over: Louis Philippe, "the Pear," had abdicated and a provisional government headed by the vague Catholic Romanticist, Lamartine, was established.

Three days later Louis, uninvited, arrived in Paris and brazenly pledged his aid to the newly proclaimed republic. But the provisional government neither needed nor welcomed his help and frankly told him to get out of the country. Wisely, if reluctantly, the unabashed Louis Napoleon resumed his social activities at Gore House. By now his English admirers began to take a real interest in his destiny. They not only realized that he had a future, but they also began to see in the Prince a leader who would check the waves of revolution that seemed destined to engulf Europe, and threatened, if left to foment and ferment, to create

<sup>30</sup> Disraeli, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-82.

political and economic conditions worse than those that existed in the days of the Great Revolution of 1789.

Meanwhile Louis Napoleon philosophically awaited developments. Biding his time, he professed devotion to democracy and to republicanism, intimating that he was remaining in England so as not to "embarrass" the republic. Actually, by staying in London he was fortunate enough to avoid participation in the terrible civil war in Paris (June, 1848) between the bourgeois republicans and the socialists, and therefore he could not be blamed by the radical proletariat for their ruthless suppression. At the same time, aware of the fear of radicalism in England as well as in Europe, Louis Napoleon very shrewdly convinced British conservatives that he was safe and sound by assuming the role of a defender of constituted law and order. Offering his services to the aged and reactionary Duke of Wellington, he became a citizen policeman and helped suppress an uprising of British Chartists who were trying to establish in England the political democracy that Louis Napoleon claimed he intended to support in France. His "gallant action" against the Chartists assured British property owners in England and in France that while he spoke like a liberal, he acted like a conservative.

The unfriendly attitude of the British press to Louis Napoleon's aspirations did not reflect the true reactions of the great English middle class. Moved by economic considerations, the merchants welcomed the rise of this exponent of law and order. Following the



outbreak of the French Revolution of 1848, business conditions in France had gone from bad to worse. The French provisional government had issued numerous decrees, some good and some bad; but all failed to stem the increasing general disorder. From May to June industrial and social riots broke out, and civil war seemed imminent. Commerce with England declined drastically, and, to the dismay of the British businessman, a severe economic crisis occurred on both sides of the Channel.

This depression, insisted the middle-class British journal, the *Economist*, was brought about by chaotic conditions in France. "The French artisan suffers, the French manufacturer suffers, the French merchant suffers, French finance suffers, . . . and France declines."<sup>31</sup> Most British middle-class men had welcomed the Revolution of 1848 in France, believing that they would profit as a result of the collapse of their competitors; but they soon discovered that this was not true. Commerce could not thrive in a vacuum. Official trade statistics for the first four months of 1848 showed that British exports had experienced an alarming drop, compared with the exports of the corresponding period in 1846 and 1847.<sup>32</sup> "The more facts are developed," stated the *Economist*, "the more must every Englishman be convinced that the true interests of this country will be consulted by whatever means restores tranquil-

<sup>31</sup> *Economist*, *Weekly Commercial Times*, *Bankers' Gazette* and *Railway Monitor: A Political, Literary, and General Newspaper*, VI (May 20, 1848), 562; hereinafter cited as *Economist*.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, VI (June 10, 1848), 671.

lity and prosperity to our disturbed neighbors.”<sup>33</sup> Moved by these considerations, the British commercial classes in June, 1848, wholeheartedly favored the establishment of a strong government in France. They were willing to give their support to any man who could end the chaotic conditions across the Channel, knowing perfectly well that if the situation continued their very livelihood would be jeopardized.

Louis Napoleon, realizing from the first that he could rely upon the backing of the British businessmen, had deliberately catered to them. In June of 1848, when he was elected to the provisional government with the support of Louis Blanc,<sup>34</sup> he very shrewdly refused to have his name associated with a government that was involved in the bloody suppression of the socialists. Quickly he relinquished his office and left France. At the same time his resignation was so conciliatory in tone that the British ambassador to France, Lord Normanby, wrote to Lord Palmerston, Prime Minister: “It is perfectly un-objectionable in its tone, [he] has pleased the smaller shopkeepers much by his reference in it to peaceful relations with foreign countries.”<sup>35</sup>

After the suppression of the socialists in Paris, Louis Napoleon, anticipating a swing to the right, returned to France. This time he received a hearty wel-

<sup>33</sup> *Economist* (June 10, 1848), VI, 650.

<sup>34</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, June 1, 1848, *Public Records Office, Foreign Office* (Great Britain), 146, 343, No. 388; hereinafter cited as *PRO, FO (GB)*.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, June 16, 1848, No. 397.



come by moderates of various groups and, in September of 1848, was elected to the National Constituent Assembly. In order to convince everyone that he was harmless, when he finally accepted a seat in the Constituent Assembly, he assumed an attitude of simplicity—if not stupidity. This he was able to do without much effort. His first speech was so mediocre that “there was a general burst of laughter when he descended the tribune and most representatives were persuaded that if Prince Louis was ambitious, he was certainly not suited for the part he intended to play at the head of the French nation.”<sup>36</sup> A shrewd Englishman, Lord Normanby, was not of this opinion. Sensing a political trend in favor of the Bonapartist, he wrote, October 29: “. . . the great probability is that within two months the affairs of this country will be in the hands of Louis Napoleon.”<sup>37</sup>

Events soon confirmed the diplomat's prediction. Taking advantage of numerous antagonisms between rightist and leftist parties, Louis Napoleon ran for the presidency. Elements of practically all groups and classes—businessmen, monarchists, peasants, and wage earners—combined, in December, 1848, to elect him by an overwhelming popular majority. At the close of the year he took the oath of office, promising “to remain faithful to the democratic republic, . . . to regard as enemies of the nation all those who may attempt by illegal

<sup>36</sup> *Economist*, VI (Oct. 14, 1848), 1165.

<sup>37</sup> Constantine Phipps Henry Normanby, *A Year of Revolution* (London, 1857), II, 273.

means to change the form of the established government." As we shall see, he had little hesitation in breaking this oath.

Many Frenchmen and Englishmen were convinced that Louis Napoleon's rise to power would injure neither France nor England. "The Prince, though not a genius, is not without talent," wrote the correspondent of the *Economist* in Paris, "and has chiefly good sense and indeed he has proved it by his conduct." Queen Victoria, tired of riots and revolutions, frankly expressed the hope that Louis Napoleon would become President.<sup>38</sup> Louis Napoleon's election on December 10, 1848, as President of the Second French Republic was received with enthusiasm in important British circles. The *Times* expressed the belief that peace would be the keynote of his policy; and property owners on both sides of the Channel were convinced that a powerful opponent of radicalism had been found.

Following Louis Napoleon's election, stocks and commerce enjoyed a period of rapid recovery. Funds rose on the Bourse; over two million francs were invested in the first month of Louis Napoleon's presidency, and during the same period commercial activities at Le Havre, Bordeaux, and Marseilles increased by almost 10 per cent.<sup>39</sup> Businessmen in France and England were delighted. They were tired of riots and bloodshed; they desired peace, order, and prosperity;

<sup>38</sup> *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, II, 241.

<sup>39</sup> *Economist*, VI (Dec. 23, 1848), 1445; and VI (Dec. 30, 1848), 1476.

and they believed that Louis Napoleon was the man who could bring about this happy (and profitable) state of affairs. Normanby, the British ambassador, maintained that Louis Napoleon had won the election because he "had placed himself in [the hands of the moderate party, the bourgeoisie] and has acted uniformly by their advice."<sup>40</sup> "I have seen very much of Louis Napoleon," wrote Lord Londonderry; "I feel every confidence in his pluck, firmness, and prudence, . . . my firm belief is that the *President* is *now* the best instrument to preserve anything like order and tranquility in France. . . ."<sup>41</sup>

Business interests in England felt that the election of Louis Napoleon might lead to a solution of the tariff problem. In 1842, when England had established her free-trade policy, France had insisted upon retaining her protectionist system. Obviously, French retention of protection limited the market for British goods in that country and led to agitation on the part of free-trade advocates in both countries to establish the policy of *laissez faire* in France. During the previous decade various attempts had been made to abolish the Anglo-French commercial treaty of 1826, a treaty that had been drawn up at a time when both countries were advocates of protection; but the French industrialists refused to allow their government to abandon this agreement. As a result, when British statesmen

<sup>40</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, Dec. 12, 1848, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 816, No. 778.

<sup>41</sup> George Peabody Gooch, ed., *The Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell, 1840-1878* (London, 1925), I, 302-3.

and merchants heard of the election of Louis Napoleon, they quite rightly recognized the possibility of a new deal in economic as well as in diplomatic matters.

The election of Louis Napoleon was welcomed in governmental circles. The Duke of Wellington wished him success.<sup>42</sup> Queen Victoria invited her uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, to rejoice with her over the election of Louis Napoleon.<sup>43</sup> This acceptance of a Bonaparte as President represented more than the belief that he would re-establish law and order and end revolution in France; it opened the possibility of an era of Anglo-French diplomatic co-operation and the end of antagonisms that in 1848 had threatened to result in war.

Despite this general friendly acceptance of Louis Napoleon as President, there were some discordant notes. The British press, with few exceptions, viewed Louis Napoleon's ascent with considerable hostility. Queried the *Times*: "Who is to be the WASHINGTON of France? We will venture to predict that whoever this historical personage may turn out to be, his name will most assuredly not be LOUIS NAPOLEON."<sup>44</sup> *Punch* ran a want-ad which read as follows:

Want—Places! As Emperor, or President, in a place where a large Standing Army is kept, by a young man of Imperial

<sup>42</sup> Edward Roth, *Life of Napoleon III*, p. 277, as quoted by John Stevens Cabot Abbott, *The History of Napoleon III, Emperor of the French* (Boston, 1869), p. 281.

<sup>43</sup> *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, II, 245.

<sup>44</sup> Sept. 23, 1848, p. 5. All citations below to the *Times* will refer to the *Times* of London.

principles, who can be well recommended—by himself. Is willing to revive the glories of the Empire, and to make Europe generally uncomfortable. References to respectable Conspirators in Boulogne and Strasburg. Was six years in his last situation, the fortress of Ham. Letters, postpaid, to be addressed to LOUIS NAPOLEON, Post restante, London.<sup>45</sup>

Even Queen Victoria was a little worried over the future, for she wrote: "It will, perhaps, however, be more difficult to get rid of him again than one at first might imagine."<sup>46</sup> *Punch* failed to welcome Louis Napoleon's election, exclaiming instead: "France rings with a brassy sound—the sound of a counterfeit Napoleon";<sup>47</sup> while the *Illustrated London News* asserted: "France has gained Universal Suffrage by the Revolution of February, 1848,—and Universal Suffrage has gained a Bonaparte; but both gains, as all the world knows by this time, may be set down as very little."<sup>48</sup>

Despite these pessimistic remarks, the British people and government accepted the election of Louis Napoleon to the Presidency and seemed willing to judge his conduct with fairness and forbearance.<sup>49</sup> High governmental officials, including Lord Palmerston, welcomed the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. During the reign of Louis Philippe this able British statesman had found it very

<sup>45</sup> *Punch, or the London Charivari*, XV (July 2, 1848), 9.

<sup>46</sup> *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, II, 245.

<sup>47</sup> XV (1848), iii (preface).

<sup>48</sup> XVI (Jan. 20, 1849), 33.

<sup>49</sup> *Times*, Jan. 10, 1849, p. 4.

difficult to co-operate in the solution of various diplomatic problems. By 1848 relations were so strained that Guizot, the French Premier, planned an alliance with Austria, Prussia, and Russia against Great Britain. The election of Louis Napoleon, Palmerston believed, changed the situation, and presaged an era of good feeling between England and France.

## President of the Second French Republic

LOUIS NAPOLEON, firmly established as President of the Second French Republic, lost no time in announcing his views on war. He assured Lord Normanby that France and England would keep peace in Europe. And he promptly expressed a willingness to adopt a joint Franco-British policy toward Italy, "the only quarter from which immediate danger to the peace of Europe was to be apprehended."<sup>1</sup> In reporting this conference with Louis Napoleon to Lord Palmerston, the British foreign minister, Normanby said that he had been impressed by the "Prince's tact and judgment." He also stated that in his opinion Louis Napoleon faced an internal situation that would be very difficult if not impossible to solve. In describing this vexing problem, Normanby wrote:

The new President and his Cabinet find themselves at a moment when six millions of men are looking to them for some extraordinary act to justify the choice they have made

<sup>1</sup> Theodore Martin, *The Life of the Prince Consort* (London, 1875-1880), II, 147.



in the utter impossibility of proposing anything. An Assembly which nothing can dissolve but its own free will or a *coup d'état* places itself in direct hostility with the executive. . . . Thus therefore the President finds himself suddenly at the head of a country of which he has no practical knowledge, without a single personal friend of any political standing, with ill defined functions and divided responsibility, forced to do absolutely nothing during an interval to be protracted at the pleasure of adversaries and whilst the country is wild with expectation.<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning of his administration Louis Napoleon knew that he was in a difficult position—or lack of one! Elected by the people, he was cut off from them by the constitution and deprived of any means of invoking their aid. He was, unwittingly, the pawn of powerful parties who blocked his constructive policies and were ready to checkmate him in their own good time. On the one hand there were his monarchist supporters, who regarded the republic as a makeshift arrangement which would end when the Bourbon or the Orleans dynasty was restored to the throne. On the other there were the revolutionary groups. They looked on Louis Napoleon as a weakling; opposed any move on the part of the conservatives in the Assembly to work with the President; and, failing in their attempts to influence Louis Napoleon to leave the moderate party and join them, were ready to participate in any attempt to overthrow his authority.<sup>3</sup> Thus there

<sup>2</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, Jan. 8, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 146, 365, No. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 28, 1849, No. 56.



developed a deadlock between the executive and legislative branches of government which the President was constitutionally powerless to overcome. Thiers, the able French statesman, well described the practically immutable constitution that created the Republic as "the most stupid, the most absurd, and the most impractical of all those that have governed France."<sup>4</sup> Its framers, seeking a snug-fitting constitutional garment, had succeeded only in fashioning a strait jacket.

Despite this predicament, Louis Napoleon could have carried out his policies under the constitution if he had been able to build up a well-organized party, controlling a majority of votes in the National Assembly. This he could not do, for the monarchists merely tolerated him; the republicans definitely disliked him; and the socialists deeply distrusted him. The only group on which he could count—the Bonapartists—was too small to exert much influence. Consequently, when he became President, Louis Napoleon was forced to create a crazy-quilt cabinet of Orleanists, Legitimists, and Catholics who had supported him and would, he hoped, aid him in carrying out his program of law, order, prosperity, and peace. Soon enough the President discovered that his own political family lacked unity and that he was confronted not only by the opposition of powerful groups in the Assembly but also by a distinct lack of harmony within his cabinet.

Louis Napoleon's absorption with these thorny in-

<sup>4</sup> Emile Ollivier, *L'Empire Libéral, études, récits, souvenirs* (Paris, 1895-1918), II, 278.

ternal problems did not deter him from going out of his way to promote friendly relations with Great Britain, or, as he later expressed it, "to obtain a thorough understanding . . . as to the treatment of every question . . . ." <sup>5</sup> On January 17, 1849, he proposed that both nations enter an agreement to limit their navies. <sup>6</sup> The *Times* welcomed this suggestion, but Lord Palmerston opposed the plan, stating that it was impossible for England with her world-wide Empire to permit her navy to be dependent on the size of the fleet of any one power. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, this offer of co-operation tended to create a friendly feeling between the two nations; and Palmerston, in an address on February 2, frankly stated that in his opinion the interests of both countries could best be served through the maintenance of cordial relations. <sup>8</sup> In commenting on the Foreign Secretary's speech, the *Times* said: "We need scarcely say that its spirit is that which pervades all England at the present moment." <sup>9</sup>

British friendship for France was strengthened by another act of the President—the abolition of the passport system. Previously an English traveler visiting France had had to pay a tax on his passport and also extra

<sup>5</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, June 18, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 845, No. 317.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 17, 1849, 146, 365.

<sup>7</sup> *Times*, Jan. 22, 1849, p. 4; Palmerston to Normanby, Jan. 25, 1849 (secret and confidential), as quoted by Frederick A. Simpson, *Louis Napoleon and the Recovery of France, 1848-1856* (2nd ed.; London, 1930), pp. 40-41.

<sup>8</sup> *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (3rd series; London, 1830-1891), CII, 206; hereinafter cited as *Parliamentary Debates*.

<sup>9</sup> Feb. 6, 1849, p. 5.

fees to enter particular towns. As a result tourist traffic and commercial relations between the two countries were seriously affected. Louis Napoleon's determination to abolish these restrictions, claimed the *Times*, was the result of his long stay in England and his knowledge of English customs.<sup>10</sup>

The English people demonstrated their friendship for Louis Napoleon through their approval of his internal policies. In 1849 France was in a state of political and social confusion. Riots and street fights occurred sporadically. A crisis was reached when a political dispute between the President and the Assembly precipitated a general revolt in Paris. At this critical moment Louis Napoleon acted with speed and decision, and the uprising was squelched. The President's success in re-establishing law and order in Paris won wide approval in London. Normanby asserted that Louis Napoleon had suppressed the rioting by using firmness and energy.<sup>11</sup> Queen Victoria, in a letter to King Leopold of Belgium, wrote: "Everybody says Louis Napoleon has behaved extremely well in the last crisis—full of courage and energy, and they say that he is decidedly straightforward, which is not to be despised."<sup>12</sup> A London paper summed up the opinion of most conservatives in England when it stated, "Louis Napoleon and his Ministry . . . have conquered the National Assembly; and the Republican party of all

<sup>10</sup> Dec. 6, 1849, p. 4. See also the issue of Dec. 18, 1849, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, Jan. 20, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 145, 365 (secret draft).

<sup>12</sup> *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, II, 252.

shades, from deep red to the palest tricolor, eats the leek of humiliation."<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile the President continued to give Englishmen further evidence of his desire to co-operate. In February, 1849, he agreed to recompense all British workers who had deposited their earnings in French banks and, at the outbreak of the Revolution of 1848, had fled across the Channel, leaving their money behind.<sup>14</sup> In the fall of 1849 he also favored joint action between France and England in a crisis involving their interests in Argentina and Uruguay.<sup>15</sup> On March 5, Louis Napoleon made a secret proposal to Lord Palmerston which was coolly received. In it the French President suggested that a European congress be called to concern itself with all problems which threatened the peace of the continent, especially those terms of the peace settlements of Vienna which were unfavorable to France.<sup>16</sup> Palmerston immediately stated his disapproval of the proposal, but he did so "in a friendly manner." Louis Napoleon then made the same suggestion to his friend, Lord Malmesbury, who was the leader of the Opposition in the British Parliament. Inasmuch as Malmesbury did not hold an office in the government, he felt that he was in no position to help the President.

There is some doubt as to Louis Napoleon's real

<sup>13</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XIV (Feb. 10, 1849), 86.

<sup>14</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, CII, 1211.

<sup>15</sup> *Times*, Oct. 4, 1849, p. 4; *Parliamentary Debates*, CVI, 732, and CVII, 90.

<sup>16</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, March 5, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 146, 365 (secret).

purpose in this matter. Simpson maintains that the President was essentially desirous of settling affairs in Italy by international arbitration.<sup>17</sup> This might well have been his immediate aim; but, at the same time, he was bent on re-establishing the hegemony of France in Europe and was endeavoring to ascertain the extent of British co-operation.

The Italian problem offered Louis Napoleon an opportunity to make France again an important continental power, and also to aid the cause of Italian liberalism—a cause that he had espoused in youth. In 1849 the Italian political situation resembled a problem play awaiting the resolute hero to untangle the dilemma. In the wings was Pope Pius IX (1848-78), who had fled from Rome the year before and now was calling upon all Catholic states to restore him to power and to extinguish the “wicked” Republic of Rome. Meanwhile, in the spotlight were the liberals, responsible for the establishment of the new government in the Eternal City; they were appealing to the puzzled audience, Great Britain and France, for recognition. Public opinion in England was cautiously sympathetic, but in France it was divided. French liberals were interested in this Italian nationalist and constitutional movement, for, although they did not favor the creation of a powerful united Italian nation across the Alps, they were sympathetic towards the Italian plan to expel the Austrians. A powerful ultramontanist group in

<sup>17</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

France, however, bitterly opposed the Roman Republic and favored the restoration of the Papacy.

England and leading European powers were suspicious of the President's intentions and opposed any kind of French intervention in Italy. Aware of this opposition, Louis Napoleon in December, 1848, withheld approval of French aid to Italian patriots, possibly because he realized that his insecure position at home made it unwise for him to participate in foreign disputes. Accordingly, he presented to the British a policy of disinterest.<sup>18</sup> For the moment he let the plot thicken. Events, however, soon forced him to act, despite his original unwillingness to be involved in the Italian problem. When the Austrians defeated Charles Albert of Sardinia and forced the Sardinian ruler to abdicate (March, 1849), Louis Napoleon changed his mind and decided to intervene. Opposed to Austrian dominance in Italy, on April 16 he sent a military expedition to Civita Vecchia to prevent the restoration of the Pope by Austria. To his surprise, the Roman people were of the opinion that French intervention meant the return of Pius IX and welcomed the expedition by gunfire. Thereupon the troops of Louis Napoleon began a siege of the Eternal City.

At first the British approved of French intervention, believing that it was an attempt to suppress revolutionary and radical movements.<sup>19</sup> The French assured Palmerston that they did not intend to impose

<sup>18</sup> *Times*, March 22, 1849, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, April 19, 1849, p. 5.



restraints on either the Pope or the Romans and that the French aims were to restore both the constitution and the Pope.<sup>20</sup> Palmerston, on the other hand, knew that the French were in a position to gain territory in Italy; but he believed that the majority of French Republicans as well as the ultra-Catholic party would prevent any territorial aggrandizement by Louis Napoleon. Palmerston's opinion was based largely on a dispatch from Normanby in which the British ambassador had said: "Both the President and his Foreign Ministers have told me separately, that the objection urged by me . . . against any occupation of Nice and Savoy had been conclusive with them."<sup>21</sup>

Parliamentary opinion was divided over the altruism of French intervention in Italy;<sup>22</sup> and the British press accepted the view of many members of Parliament that France should clarify her intentions and that Palmerston should frankly state the British attitude on this problem even though "he happened . . . to be in the honeymoon of a French alliance."<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile *Punch* presented its unique interpretation of the Italian affair by announcing: "Rome is the capital of the world, and may be best invested by adding French principle to Austrian interest."<sup>24</sup> Elsewhere it in-

<sup>20</sup> Palmerston to Normanby, May 16, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 844, as cited by William Ross Collins, *Catholicism and the Second French Republic, 1848-1852* (New York, 1923), p. 231.

<sup>21</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, April 24, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 146, 366, No. 207.

<sup>22</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, XIV, 454-56; CV, 361-84.

<sup>23</sup> *Times*, June 30, 1849, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> XVII (July 28, 1849), 35.

quired: "Why is the French army at Rome like a London citizen at his country house? Because it is where it has no business."<sup>25</sup> In contrast with these unfriendly opinions, the bourgeois paper, the *Economist*, reflected the consistent middle-class support of Louis Napoleon when it approved the peaceful intentions of the French President and declared that the foreign policies of the two nations had been in direct accord.<sup>26</sup>

Despite opposition in England and in Europe, Louis Napoleon continued the siege of Rome; he captured the city on July 14, 1849, and announced the restoration of the spiritual authority of the Pope. Resolved though the drama appeared to be, lo and behold, a serio-comic element entered in as Pius IX, distrustful of the whole situation, refused to return to Rome at once and sent three cardinals to act in his place. These churchmen restored the reactionary policies of Gregory XVI (1830-48) and thereby threatened to blight the liberal movement in Italy.

This action placed Louis Napoleon in an embarrassing position, for he had promised the British that he would restore the Pope and at the same time establish a constitutional government in Rome. Now his hands were tied. He had become a champion of the papal cause and thus was in no position to force the Pope to grant liberal reforms. Moreover, he faced at home the powerful opposition of Catholic and conservative groups who were vigorously backing the reactionary

<sup>25</sup> *Punch*, XVII (July 28, 1849), p. 36.

<sup>26</sup> VII (June 9, 1849), 626.



policy of Pius IX. Despite this opposition, Louis Napoleon ordered his chief officer at Rome, Colonel Ney, to present the exiled Pope with a letter outlining the liberal program which Louis Napoleon thought Pius should follow. At the same time the French government informed the British ambassador that France would not exact "any conditions from the Pope as the price of his entrance into Rome, but her efforts will be to have an understanding with him . . . that the Roman people in improved institutions and in advance towards self government find reason permanently to remember with no hostile feeling French intervention in their affairs."<sup>27</sup> Every suggestion in the President's communication to the Pope was rejected by the Holy Father; and Louis Napoleon, very much annoyed, decided "to make no further diplomatic efforts in this matter."<sup>28</sup>

British reaction to Louis Napoleon's letter was very favorable. One British publication stated that the President was doing everything in his power to secure liberty for the Romans. This same journal accused Odilon Barrot, Louis Napoleon's premier, of betraying the President by influencing the National Assembly to accept the Pope's rejection of his proposals.<sup>29</sup> In commenting on the opposition to the President's Italian policy, Normanby informed Palmerston that "affairs had arrived at a point where, unless he [the President]

<sup>27</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, July 17, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 846, No. 389.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 847, No. 495.

<sup>29</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XV (Oct. 27, 1849), 273-74.

meant to accept the character of a cypher, a bold stroke was before long his only resource."<sup>30</sup> And thus the curtain rang down on the befuddled actors in this sorry political play.

What happened in Italy was symptomatic of France's general instability. In June, 1849, Normanby, for instance, mentioned the lack of unity in France and the failure of republican leaders to support sound bourgeois constitutional government. As a result of this situation he was of the opinion that France—in fact, Europe—was on the verge of “a struggle between extreme parties.”<sup>31</sup>

By midsummer of 1849 Louis Napoleon faced a mutinous cabinet, and the French ship of state followed an uncertain course. Monarchists were afraid of a socialist revolution that would lead to another Empire. The middle classes of Paris frankly stated that the election of a new president, inasmuch as Louis Napoleon was not eligible for a second term, might result in a *coup d'état*. They were of the opinion that the rigid constitution would bring about the solution of the problem by “extra-constitutional means,” and, most important, they were convinced that “business will never revive till this crisis is past.”<sup>32</sup> “Men who have been for years the leading advocates of popular opinions,” wrote the British ambassador, August 30, 1849, “have told me within the last few months that French society is

<sup>30</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, Nov. 5, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 848, No. 523 (confidential).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 845, No. 317.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 846 (secret and confidential).

unfitted for [constitutional government] . . . and that there is no future in store for their country until there shall have been an intervening period of absolute power." Then, in commenting on the situation, Normanby placed full blame for this "chaotic" condition in France on the National Assembly.

The finances—public instruction, national defences, relief of the poor—are still subjects left in hopeless confusion. . . . There is no denying that the assembly and that which preceded it has shown a striking inaptitude for dealing with all subjects of a practical character. . . . Indeed the most discouraging symptom for the future political consideration of this country is the gradual absorption in one or other of two extremes of all men of moderate opinions.<sup>33</sup>

This conflict between the President and the Cabinet resulted in a sharp decline on the Bourse and a panic among the commercial classes on both sides of the Channel. "France is threatened with more calamities, and all Europe is threatened in France," claimed the *Economist*,<sup>34</sup> while the *Times* explained the unfortunate situation in terms of "the unhappy constitution of society itself."<sup>35</sup>

At this critical juncture the President unexpectedly assumed the initiative. To the surprise of British officialdom he boldly met the challenge of his enemies by dismissing the hostile Barrot ministry. The British Cabinet immediately approved of this action, and even Lord Normanby, who disliked Louis Napoleon

<sup>33</sup> Aug. 30, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 847, No. 452.

<sup>34</sup> VII (Oct. 20, 1849), 1159.

<sup>35</sup> VII (Oct. 27, 1851), 4.

personally, said: "Should by these means the independent action of the President be secured, it will tend more than any other circumstance to consolidate the alliance with England to which he is above all other men in France most devotedly attached."<sup>36</sup>

Some Englishmen interpreted Louis Napoleon's dismissal of his cabinet as a step in the direction of a dictatorship. A prominent Englishman living in Paris at the time predicted correctly in a letter to Lord John Russell a political coup when he remarked: "It is impossible to believe that a step so important as the one lately taken by the President is not connected in his mind with something in the future, and that he is not thus preparing the ground for another move some time hence."<sup>37</sup> In contrast to this alarmist view, the President's old friend, the *Economist*, did not disapprove of Louis Napoleon's decision, maintaining that the cabinet of Barrot had become the slave of Molé and Thiers. At the same time it admitted the possibility of a dictatorship and intimated: "If Louis Napoleon were either an abler or a less ambitious man we should have less fear of the result of the present crisis."<sup>38</sup>

One week later the Paris correspondent of the same journal mentioned the rumor of a *coup d'état* by Louis as a direct result of this dismissal.<sup>39</sup> Even the *Times*,

<sup>36</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, Nov. 5, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 848, No. 523 (confidential).

<sup>37</sup> Abercromby to Russell, Nov. 6, 1849, *Public Records Office, Foreign Office (Gifts and Deposits)*, 288 (Russell papers); hereinafter cited as *PRO, FO (GD)*.

<sup>38</sup> VII (Nov. 3, 1849), 1213-14.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* (Nov. 10, 1849), 1248-49.

while questioning the wisdom of Louis Napoleon's action, admitted that his fortunes "had reached a point at which some vigorous move was required to save him from the most inglorious form of political extinction."<sup>40</sup> In dismissing his cabinet, Louis Napoleon had taken the first step in his ascent to real power, without incurring the hostility of England.

In the winter of 1849 the general impression in England seemed to be that the French ship of state was still adrift and that the pilot was unable to steer it to a haven of refuge. ". . . the government of LOUIS NAPOLEON," announced the *Times* on January 1, "has laboured creditably to perform very arduous duties . . . a resting-place has been found,—and a raft constructed from the wreck of a great kingdom."<sup>41</sup> But Lord Normanby was less sanguine. In December, 1849, he seemed to be very pessimistic about the situation in France. As he interpreted conditions, the President had failed to follow up his dismissal of the cabinet by taking "decided steps to improve things." Instead, he had since "found himself in a position of helpless inaction." Meanwhile accounts from the provinces told

<sup>40</sup> Nov. 3, 1849, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> P. 4. While trying to steer a straight course between the extremists on the right and the left, Louis Napoleon never lost sight of the importance of British friendship. With this in mind he appointed as his ambassador to London the able French diplomat, Drouyn de Lhuys, who was an ardent advocate of close relations between the two countries. Also, to show the British that he had no thoughts of war (and to balance the budget), the President reduced military expenditures. This demonstration of economy pleased the British. See the *Times*, Feb. 6, 1850, p. 5, and April 11, 1850, p. 4.

of the rapid spread of socialism and the need for action before it was too late.<sup>42</sup>

In Paris certain political factions endeavored to gain control of the government by using the President as a pawn; riots broke out spasmodically, especially in Paris; and trivial incidents precipitated a number of armed clashes. In February an uprising was occasioned by the cutting down of "liberty trees."<sup>43</sup> In the early days of the Republic trees had been planted in various parks and streets in order to commemorate the establishment of liberty. For some unforeseen reason these trees never grew and soon disfigured the Parisian boulevards. Finally the decision was made to cut them down; but when the police attempted to do this, crowds gathered, the ax-wielders fled, troops arrived, and a riot ensued.

These uprisings were viewed with misgiving in England. Some Englishmen feared the spread of this unrest across the Channel, while many others were disgusted when they heard of the expulsion, without a trial, by the French government of those implicated in the disturbances. British business interests were especially perturbed by disorders in France. They believed their economic prosperity was to a large extent dependent upon the maintenance of peace and stability in France. These riots, in their opinion, prevented economic progress, and their publication the *Economist*,

<sup>42</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, Dec. 6, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 848, No. 576.

<sup>43</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XVI (Feb. 9, 1850), 82.



demanded the "removing of obstacles to the industry and progress of the people" in order that material prosperity and law and order might prevail across the Channel.<sup>44</sup>

Louis Napoleon realized that the great European powers as well as England were worried over the increasing disorder in France. He also knew that many influential men in these countries were dubious that he could control the unruly political elements. He shrewdly turned European hostility to his own advantage by requesting an extension of his authority from the Assembly, seeking "to conciliate the continental powers by endeavoring to persuade them that the consolidation of his authority can alone preserve France from some fresh explosion, or from a contest which would be extremely dangerous to the peace of the principal European states."<sup>45</sup>

The British were especially concerned over the spread of socialism in France. In the March elections to replace members involved in the riots in thirty constituencies, the socialist and republican candidates won smashing victories. News of this "radical" upsurge was followed by a decline in stocks and a panic. Foreigners left Paris hurriedly; many Englishmen predicted a revolution and the establishment of a socialist state.<sup>46</sup>

Louis Napoleon seemed to be the only man strong

<sup>44</sup> VIII (Jan. 26, 1850), 89.

<sup>45</sup> *Times*, Feb. 13, 1850, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Economist*, VIII (March 23, 1850), 318; Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 93; Ollivier, *L'Empire Libéral*, II, 271-73.

enough to prevent this alleged catastrophe. At home, however, he lacked the powerful middle-class and conservative support that he possessed in England; at home, too, he was opposed by republicans and socialists on the left and by monarchists on the right. With the friends of order split, the future of France seemed a gloomy one indeed.<sup>47</sup> In this chaotic political situation, the President attempted to reorganize his ministry. But Changarnier, commander of the army in Paris, upset the President's cabinet reforms. Louis Napoleon was more successful in his determination to take strong measures against the "radicals," for, with the help of conservatives in his government, he was able to pass drastic laws against the socialists and republicans. Political meetings were curbed, and a Press Law, which denied certain left-wing newspapers the privilege of selling their copies in the streets of Paris, was enacted.<sup>48</sup>

Despite these attempts to check "radicalism," stocks continued to fall and tourists hastened to leave France. There was a general feeling in London that France was headed toward another crisis—one that Louis Napoleon might use as a pretext for a *coup d'état*. "We observe with regret," noted the *Times*, "how all the energy of the country is wasted in its social sores or consumed in a struggle for political existence; but we anticipate no speedy termination to this miserable condition of affairs by the ordinary contrivances of

<sup>47</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XVI (March 16, 1850), 174.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI (May 4, 1850), 297.



legislation.”<sup>49</sup> Commenting on this situation, an Englishman who was living in Paris at the time wrote: “It is strange the condition of mind of all in this city. Every day, sometimes twice a day, [appear] rumors of a decree, a *coup d'état*, a Bill which will drive the Socialists to fury, then a struggle.”<sup>50</sup>

In March the increasing number of socialists in the Assembly forced the Bonapartists and monarchists in that body to appoint a commission for study of the electoral law. After a brief investigation this committee drew up a bill which limited universal suffrage by requiring three years' residence and what in practice amounted to a property qualification in order to vote.<sup>51</sup> By this act the rightists planned to cut down the “radical” votes; to eliminate thereby the leftists' representation in the Assembly; and, according to royalist plans, possibly to ease Louis Napoleon out of the picture at the same time.<sup>52</sup> On May 21 the revised electoral law was passed by the Assembly and was approved by Louis Napoleon. Three million of the ten million male voters were deprived of the ballot.

Passage of this measure shocked the British people. Many believed that Louis Napoleon in signing it proved that he had lost his mind. If sane he would

<sup>49</sup> March 29, 1850, p. 4. See also the *Economist*, VIII (May 18, 1850), 540; and the *Illustrated London News*, XVI (March 30, 1850), 214-15.

<sup>50</sup> Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury* (London, 1887), II, 315.

<sup>51</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Raphael, “La Loi du 31 mai 1851,” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, XIII (March-April, 1910), 290-91.

have realized that he had been elected only because of universal suffrage and that, without it, his enemies would control the elections and he would be thrown out of office. Others were convinced that the royalists had tricked the President.<sup>53</sup> In time Englishmen discovered that Louis Napoleon's support of the May Law was a clever bit of political chicanery. Originally he signed it in order to obtain the backing of the powerful monarchist groups in the Assembly in a war on socialism; but, more immediately, he hoped, as a reward for his patriotism, to obtain from the monarchists an increase in salary. Money matters had embarrassed the President for some time. He had returned to France in 1848 with limited financial resources and had been forced to borrow money in order to conduct his election campaign for the Presidency. By 1850 he was deeply in debt, inasmuch as his meager salary as President made it impossible for him to pay for banquets, entertainments, state functions, and frequent displays of pomp and ceremony before the people.<sup>54</sup> After a protracted debate in the Assembly, the President's salary was given a generous boost.

The British on the whole approved of Louis Napoleon's request for a raise. Stated the *Times*: "... it obviously concerns the dignity and the true interests of the nation that the head of the State should be placed above the reach of personal embarrassment."<sup>55</sup> But *Punch*, with its usual cynicism, asserted:

<sup>53</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XVI (May 11, 1850), 334.

<sup>54</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>55</sup> June 27, 1850, p. 5.

. . . if LOUIS NAPOLEON is to go on relieving distress and dispensing happiness to infinity, he must be the goose with the golden eggs, or else, if he persists in such munificence, he will be the goose without them. . . . it is perfectly reasonable that, being expected to furnish a constant stream of bounty, he should claim an adequate supply from the national well. Otherwise, indeed, he would be a mere empty Pump.<sup>56</sup>

While Anglo-French relations were on the whole friendly, one incident, the Don Pacifico affair of 1850, threatened for a time to rupture the harmony between the two countries. Don Pacifico, a Portuguese Jew, fortuitously born a British subject at Gibraltar, had lost his property during a riot in Athens. The Greek government refused to grant the exorbitant compensation he demanded, whereupon he appealed to the British government. Lord Palmerston seized the opportunity to assert in Commons the all-pervasive authority of Britannia, demanded payment, blockaded the Greek coast, and seized some ships. France now offered her arbitration. Meanwhile Great Britain continued the blockade and seized additional Greek boats. Russia joined France in protesting these actions, and Louis Napoleon recalled his ambassador from London. Finally, when Russia threatened to remove her representative, the blockade was lifted and the claim was settled by arbitration. This affair tended to strengthen the relations of Russia and France, and to weaken

<sup>56</sup> XVIII (June 22, 1850), 246. For additional comments, see the *Economist*, VIII (June 8, 1850), 623, and Charles Dickens, *Household Narrative of Current Events, Being a Monthly Supplement to Household Words*, June, 1850, p. 140; hereinafter cited as *Household Narrative*.

Anglo-French friendship. The flamboyant Palmerston had been hard on French nerves.

In the discussions that accompanied this incident, it is interesting to note that the leading British papers carefully refrained from involving Louis Napoleon in the matter. The *Times* and the *Illustrated London News* both criticized Palmerston for his high-handed treatment of the controversy;<sup>57</sup> and they denounced two French politicians, Thiers and Molé, as the Frenchmen who were plotting to bring France and England to war—but they left Napoleon alone.<sup>58</sup>

In the early fall of 1850 Louis Napoleon stirred the interest of the British people by another dramatic act. On August 12 the President announced that he intended to use the period between the sessions of the Assembly to test his popularity by visiting various parts of France. Accordingly, he left Paris and first traveled in the eastern provinces, the socialist stronghold. Much like the latter-day American presidential candidates, he went on a whirlwind campaign. Between August 12 and 28 he visited over fifty towns, entering Lyons, the center of socialism, on the fifteenth, the birthday of Napoleon I. Wherever he went he was welcomed by thousands of spectators, and in Lyons volatile Frenchmen chanted the slogan: "*Vive Napoléon!*" Impressed by the warmth of his reception in the city, Louis Napoleon indicated for the first time that he might remain in office after his term had expired when he said: ". . .

<sup>57</sup> *Times*, March 28, 1850, p. 4, and May 18, 1850, p. 6; *Illustrated London News*, XVI (May 18, 1850), 351.

<sup>58</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XVI (May 25, 1850), 362.

I shall be entirely at the country's service, no matter what alternative it demands of me, sacrifice or perseverance."<sup>59</sup> Ready as usual to interpret the significance of Louis Napoleon's visit, *Punch* called him "The Gentleman of Lyons," and stated: "He did his best to clothe himself in the second-hand habits of his illustrious uncle, and LOUIS NAPOLEON in Lyons must have reminded many of the fable of an ignoble animal in the Lion's skin."<sup>60</sup> But like Daniel, the President had invaded the lion's den and had come out with a whole skin. His tour, therefore, was judged by many of the important British papers as a complete success.<sup>61</sup> The *London Times* asserted: "The journey . . . is certainly the most singular manifestation of his personal influence and position which has been given since he assumed the executive government of the Republic. . . . an ascent step by step from the rank of President to the distant grandeur of the Empire would probably command the support of the people."<sup>62</sup>

At the same time there was some criticism of Louis Napoleon's trip. The *Illustrated London News* and Charles Dickens in his *Narrative* were somewhat hostile; Dickens, for example, frankly stated that "Louis Napoleon has been travelling in search of a throne, and appears to have failed in obtaining any reasonable pros-

<sup>59</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>60</sup> XIX (Aug. 30, 1850), 97.

<sup>61</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XVII (Aug. 17, 1850), 130; *Times*, Aug. 19, 1850, p. 4; Joseph Irving, *Annals of Our Times . . . 1837-1871* (London, 1890), p. 308. See also Pierre de La Gorce, *Histoire de la seconde République française* (Paris, 1899-1905), II, 361.

<sup>62</sup> Aug. 19, 1850, p. 4.

pect of the object of his quest.”<sup>63</sup> Regardless of what people thought of his tour, the President was convinced that he possessed a stronger hold on the people than he had before realized.<sup>64</sup>

Encouraged by his trip in the socialist east, the President decided to visit the royalist west. Leaving Paris on September 3, he traveled across the province of Normandy, receiving the plaudits of large crowds. On this trip his principal objective was the naval city of Cherbourg. Upon his arrival he reviewed two naval groups which had been ordered there for the occasion, the French Mediterranean fleet and a British flotilla. Quick to take advantage of this evidence of British cordiality, Louis Napoleon proclaimed his sincere desire to co-operate with England. “Louis Napoleon—Prince Napoleon—plays the monarch, too, very well . . .,” admitted the *Economist*.<sup>65</sup> The President returned to Paris, his mind doubtless overcome by visions of an empire basing itself on an enchanted people.

In his bid for popularity Louis Napoleon next turned to the Army. Early in October he ordered a series of military reviews with the expressed purpose of bringing himself before the soldiers. To his delight, constant cries of “*Vive Napoléon*” greeted his appearance before troops hardly old enough to remember Leipzig and Waterloo. At the close of maneuvers the

<sup>63</sup> Aug., 1850, p. 188.

<sup>64</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, 1850, as quoted by Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>65</sup> VIII (Sept. 14, 1850), 1013. See the *Illustrated London News*, XVII (Sept. 14, 1850), 228-30, for description and pictures of his triumphal tour.



servicemen were entertained lavishly at Louis Napoleon's expense. Their leader, the monarchist General Changarnier, was furious over this outright courtship of his men and openly declared his animosity.

The British interpreted Louis Napoleon's attempts to win the friendship of the people and of the Army for what they were. "He aspires to be an Emperor, in a legal quiet way," said the *Economist*,<sup>66</sup> while Dickens wrote: "The month has been filled with the intrigues and counter-intrigues of the minister-of-war and the commander-in-chief and with Louis Napoleon's attempts upon the army by means of Chicken and Champagne."<sup>67</sup>

Finally, during the latter part of 1850, Louis Napoleon determined to strengthen his popularity by acquiring a bit of land on the left bank of the Rhine. The ambitious President knew that ordinarily Prussia and Austria would oppose this move, but at that time they were engaged in a quarrel over the German province of Hesse-Cassel, and he thought that they probably would be too preoccupied to contest the French annexation. Should they protest, however, he was prepared to fight. Actually, at the last minute, unwilling to risk a resort to war, he changed his mind. The English followed this incident with great interest and were relieved when the whole matter was dropped.<sup>68</sup> In interpreting the happy ending, Guizot wrote: "Two

<sup>66</sup> VIII (Oct. 5, 1850), 1097.

<sup>67</sup> *Household Narrative*, Oct., 1850, p. 235; La Gorce, *Histoire de la seconde République française*, II, 188.

<sup>68</sup> *Economist*, VIII (Dec. 7, 1850), 1347-48, 1353.

things are certain: the country would like war, but wants peace, the Elysée would like the empire, but will not risk the presidency. On both sides prudence is stronger than desire."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> John Knox Laughton, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Henry Reeve* (London, 1898), I, 232.



## Rise of a Dictator

BY THE CLOSE of 1850 Louis Napoleon's popularity among the people seemed to have won for him an advantage over the Assembly. Determined to capitalize on the new situation, he dissolved (with its consent) the Société du Dix-Décembre, the only Bonapartist party, in order to prove that no plot to establish a dictatorship was contemplated.<sup>1</sup> Then he delivered an address before the Assembly that was calculated to satisfy everyone. In it he described his recent visits to the provinces and expressed his interest in the Army, Navy, clergy, farmer, and industrialist. He also intimated that he wanted to remain neutral in the various troubles in the Germanies, and gave the reassurance that he contemplated no territorial aggrandizement. This speech soothed the nervous bourgeois elements, especially in France and in England, and increased Louis Napoleon's popularity. Guizot, minister under Louis Philippe, remarked, "For the moment the Presi-

<sup>1</sup> Simpson, *Louis Napoleon and the Recovery of France, 1848-1856*, p. 110.

dent is cock of the walk. His message has succeeded very well. It is a retreat; but a very clever retreat, made in a triumphal chariot. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile the British press waxed really enthusiastic over the talk, praising the President's wisdom and even going so far as to assert that France "will not find a man more ready to lead her in that path of real glory than LOUIS NAPOLEON."<sup>3</sup>

But the period of tranquillity that many thought would follow this address did not materialize. There was strong opposition to Louis Napoleon in military circles. In January, 1851, the long-smoldering feud between the President and his Orleanist military leader, General Changarnier, broke into flames; and, again displaying the courage that was occasionally his, Louis dismissed the general.<sup>4</sup> This affair was interpreted by many as signifying presidential control of the Army, and it created a sensation on both sides of the Channel. It was followed by the formation of a new cabinet and a marked increase of animosity between Louis Napoleon and the National Assembly. The conservative friends of Changarnier tried to persuade the Assembly to condemn the action of the President, but that body refused either to censure Louis Napoleon or to vindicate the general. As a result, the reactionaries lost their "brass hat" champion and Louis Napoleon gained freedom from regulation by the military head in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Laughton, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Henry Reeve*, I, 233.

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, Nov. 14, 1850, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-14.

The British press heartily applauded this bold and drastic coup. According to the *Times*, Louis Napoleon could no longer tolerate a military authority that refused to acknowledge itself amenable to his government. "It is time that General Changarnier be removed."<sup>5</sup> Other papers carried articles favoring the President's signal triumph over his enemies.<sup>6</sup> Charles Dickens, however, cast doubt upon the wisdom of the President's action by implying that, as a consequence of it, "Louis Napoleon [has] surrendered for the present his fitful Imperial dream."<sup>7</sup> Louis Napoleon could afford to wait.

The President's victory was especially welcomed by the British merchants. They expected an unprecedented expansion of business in the winter of 1850-51 and did not want political turmoil in France to disrupt trade between the two countries. In their opinion Louis Napoleon was the only man who could keep the peace. "Louis Napoleon," wrote Richard Cobden, the famous British advocate of free trade, "protects [the businessmen] from disorder and leaves them in peace and quietness to follow their avocations. It is this feeling that prompts . . . the industrialists of Paris to offer their felicitations to the usurping President and this is the cause of the *rentes* rising 15 per cent."<sup>8</sup>

Support of Louis Napoleon by the business elements

<sup>5</sup> Jan. 8, 1851, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Economist*, IX (Jan. 25, 1851), 83; *Illustrated London News*, XVIII (Jan. 11, 1851), 22, 33, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Dickens, *Household Narrative*, Jan., 1851, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> John Atkinson Hobson, *Richard Cobden, the International Man* (New York, 1919), p. 84.

of both countries swelled as economic conditions improved. After a short setback commerce began to recover. The market stopped fluctuating, stocks advanced on the Bourse, interest rates declined, and the number of depositors in the Bank of France rose.<sup>9</sup> All of this was accompanied by a marked expansion of trade between England and France. Exportation of French grain to England in return for manufactured goods became so great that, according to the *Economist*, "Instead of armed steamers knocking down our towns, the French are sending us sacks of Normandy or Paris-made flour, and pelting us with bread, not bullets . . . France being an extraordinary example of a nation from which we expected nothing sending us a great deal."<sup>10</sup> There is no doubt that the British were elated with the revival of trade and gave the President full credit for bringing this about. His firm stand against the Assembly and his successful handling of the Changarnier incident had convinced English businessmen that he alone could maintain law and order in France and bring prosperity to both countries.

Louis Napoleon's popularity among the bourgeoisie in England and France was augmented by another controversy between him and the Assembly. Needing money to maintain his household, the President asked the legislative body to renew his dotation of three million francs to cover necessary debts and expenses. The Assembly, still angry over the fall of Changarnier, re-

<sup>9</sup> *Economist*, IX (Jan. 25, 1851), 83.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

fused to pass the bill.<sup>11</sup> Thereupon Louis Napoleon announced that as a result of this adverse vote, he would be forced to eliminate some of the diplomatic functions of the state as well as of his immediate household. This aroused considerable sympathy for him in England and in France, and made the National Assembly appear selfish and vindictive. Meanwhile the President ostentatiously carried out his economy program by dismissing his servants, by selling his horses and carriages, and by eliminating some of the expensive receptions at the Élysée.<sup>12</sup> The Bonapartist press, feigning self-righteous indignation, announced the opening of a subscription to enable the penurious President to meet his financial obligations. Manufacturers of Rouen declared they would subscribe a million francs, and the people of Lyons promised to give Louis Napoleon their wages for two days out of each month until six million francs had been raised.<sup>13</sup> The President in reply expressed deep appreciation of their loyalty, but "refused to receive contributions from the good citizens of the countryside."<sup>14</sup> By this "noble gesture," Louis Napoleon further endeared himself to the French people. The *Economist*, in cleverly explaining the change in the attitude of the working classes as well as

<sup>11</sup> Irving, *Annals of Our Times*, p. 318.

<sup>12</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XVIII (Feb. 22, 1851), 154; *Household Narrative*, Feb., 1851, p. 45; Abbott, *The History of Napoleon III*, p. 415.

<sup>13</sup> Louis D. Véron, *Nouveaux mémoires d'un bourgeois de Paris* (Paris, 1853-55), VI, 102-3; *Economist*, IX (Feb. 8, 1851), 145. See also Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

<sup>14</sup> *Economist*, IX (Feb. 15, 1851), 170.

of the bourgeoisie, noted: "They [the wage earners] were two years ago completely addicted to socialism and ultrademocratic opinions. But now they are devoted adherents to the President, and many of them would not even oppose a *coup d'état* and the proclamation of an empire."<sup>15</sup> Other British papers sharply condemned the National Assembly for vetoing the Dotation Bill. The *Times* called that body the "gaoler of the executive power";<sup>16</sup> and even Dickens praised the President's actions, stating that "this was a new way of fighting the Assembly."<sup>17</sup>

The defeat of the bill brought about three significant developments. In the first place, it led to a split in the monarchist group, and some of its Catholic leaders—as, for example, Montalembert, who condemned the rejection of the bill—joined the Bonapartist cause.<sup>18</sup> In the second place, it strengthened Louis Napoleon's hold on the people, especially when he refused to accept a public subscription. In the third place, it convinced him that any attempt to extend his powers legally would be bitterly opposed by the Assembly, and that a fight to the finish was inevitable.

A gradual decline of industry and commerce in France and in England during March and April, 1851, strengthened Louis Napoleon's resolve to act. French capitalists saw in the closing down of factories at Lyons

<sup>15</sup> IX (Feb. 8, 1851), 145; see also Francis William Henry Cavendish, *Society, Politics, and Diplomacy, 1820-1863; Passages from the Journal of Francis W. H. Cavendish* (London, 1913), pp. 203-4.

<sup>16</sup> Jan. 20, 1851, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Household Narrative*, Feb., 1851, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> Jerrold, *The Life of Napoleon III*, II, 159-61.

and elsewhere and in the decline of stocks the beginning of a depression which they believed was caused by the parliamentary turmoil that had prevailed.<sup>19</sup> They began to dread the terrible crisis that they thought was bound to come when a new president and assembly were elected in the late fall of 1851. French as well as British traders became alarmed over shrinking commercial transactions and diminishing business.<sup>20</sup> It was apparent to them that the depression in France and the attendant hoarding of money (as shown by the increase of deposits in the Bank of France) explained why the French could no longer buy British manufactured goods. For these reasons the British merchants and industrialists were ready to welcome the rise of a strong man in France—a leader who would end the financial chaos and restore commercial activity. Louis Napoleon, aware of this feeling, in June made plans to bring about a legal extension and prolongation of his powers.

Any enlargement of the presidential authority or term of office necessitated a revision of the constitution by consent of the National Assembly. Public opinion in France favored the change, and even in the Assembly the advocates of constitutional revision seemed to be in the majority. The constitution, however, required a three-fourths vote of the entire legislative body legally to change any of its provisions, and the chances were

<sup>19</sup> Nassau William Senior, *Journals Kept in France and Italy from 1848-1852* (2nd ed.; London, 1871), II, 175 (hereinafter cited as *Journals*); Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, translated by Edward Cedar Paul (New York, 1926), pp. 113, 116; *Times*, March 27, 1851, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Economist*, IX (March 15, 1851), 286.



slim that such a majority could be obtained. Nevertheless, Louis Napoleon was bent on bringing about this revision. Speaking before a group of Republican and Orleanist deputies at Dijon, he described the deplorable situation in the Assembly that made co-operation impossible and prevented reforms and progress.<sup>21</sup> The address created a sensation in both England and France, for it marked a complete break between the President and the Assembly. Reconciliation seemed impossible.

A considerable section of British and French public opinion blamed the National Assembly for the split.<sup>22</sup> The *Illustrated London News* stated that "the majority never cordially or honestly worked with the President," while the Duc de Broglie in a conversation with Nassau William Senior, an English traveler in France, expressed the opinion that "it would be better to renew the lease with [Louis Napoleon] than to try a new one."<sup>23</sup>

The defeat on July 19 of the proposed revision of the constitution by a small minority group in the Assembly spread the fog of uncertainty from France across the Channel and enveloped England. To a number of English pessimists, this rejection meant an inevitable socialist revolution in France with the President, the

<sup>21</sup> Charles Seignobos, *La Révolution de 1848—Le Second Empire 1848-1859* (Vol. VI of *Histoire de France contemporaine*, ed. by Ernest Lavisse, Paris, 1920-22), VI, 195. Quite appropriately, Louis Napoleon delivered this address at a meeting commemorating the opening of the additional portion of the trunk line railway from Paris to Lyons.

<sup>22</sup> *Times*, June 28, 1851, p. 5; *Economist*, IX (June 14, 1851), 643; *Illustrated London News*, XVIII (June 14, 1851), 549.

<sup>23</sup> Senior, *Journals*, II, 202.



Assembly, and the people unable to stop it. To other gloomy souls it presaged a period of political turmoil that would bring about a complete breakdown of economic activity in the two countries.

Actually, the economic depression had started several months before the revision was rejected. By May, 1851, the British middle classes were on the verge of a commercial panic. Business stagnation in France had left them without a market and—horror of horrors, to merchants—with a surplus of goods on hand. This sad situation could be alleviated only by the restoration of political stability and economic prosperity in France. When the Revision Bill was introduced in the National Assembly, British businessmen believed that its passage would pave the way for a return to political stability in France and for rapid economic recovery in both nations. Therefore, to them the defeat of the bill was a calamity.<sup>24</sup>

Aware of this burgeoning bourgeois support, the President foresaw an opportunity to use the defeat of "Revision" by a "minority" of the Assembly as "an invitation from the people to the President to cut his cords and theirs."<sup>25</sup> He decided to override the Assembly and the constitution. For the moment, however, Louis Napoleon pursued a policy of watchful waiting. He knew that his opponents were bound to commit additional blunders and that when the proper

<sup>24</sup> *Times*, May 23, 1851, pp. 4, 5, May 21, 1851, p. 5, June 5, 1851, p. 4, and June 28, 1851, p. 5; *Economist*, IX (July 28, 1851), 706.

<sup>25</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

time came, with the support of the trading and industrial classes in every part of France, he would strike.<sup>26</sup>

His deadline was less than a month away when, upon the reconvening of the Assembly on November 4, Louis Napoleon asked the members to repeal the infamous May Law. He was convinced that the revocation of this bill which restricted suffrage would be applauded by the middle classes and by the masses and that refusal to accede to his request would serve as a justifiable excuse for a *coup d'état*. With the British and French middle classes and the French Army behind him he knew that the time was ripe for a direct frontal attack.

It is true that Louis Napoleon had signed the May Law and thus by advocating its repeal was placing himself in a rather inconsistent position. "But," said a London newspaper, "such contradictions are inevitable."<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the President had prepared a good defense. Although he had approved the bill for a good reason (the extinction of radicalism), he felt that by now it had served its purpose and that its retention only increased the possibility of civil war.<sup>28</sup> Obviously this statement was designed to appeal to the bourgeoisie of France, who dreaded the crisis that might accompany the election of 1852. Thus the President made the Assembly appear reactionary in opposing the abolition of the bill, while he cleverly avoided most criticism

<sup>26</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XIX (Sept. 27, 1851), 386.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX (Nov. 8, 1851), 566.

<sup>28</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

which would have labeled him as inconsistent in signing it.

In his attempt to change the Electoral Law, Louis Napoleon seems to have had the support of the British.<sup>29</sup> The *Illustrated London News*, for example, expressed the opinion that its repeal was the only safe course for Louis Napoleon and France to adopt, inasmuch as "The restoration of the principle of universal suffrage would deprive the street revolutionists of their opportunity and consign the fortunes of the republic to the ballot box instead of the barricades."<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who was living in Paris at the time, was convinced that Louis Napoleon would not have proposed the Repeal Bill if he had not been sure of his hold on the people. She also believed that the revision of the constitution would enable him to be re-elected President.<sup>31</sup>

That the British government approved of the President's measure was indicated in a letter by Palmerston, written on November 20 to the British ambassador at Paris: "... it seems to me that Louis Napoleon is master of the field of battle, and will carry the day. I have always thought that such a result would be the best thing for France and England."<sup>32</sup> This British support of Louis Napoleon's policy is not difficult to

<sup>29</sup> *Household Narrative*, Oct., 1851, p. 236; *Economist*, IX (Nov. 8, 1851), 1235.

<sup>30</sup> XIX (Oct. 25, 1851), 514.

<sup>31</sup> Frederick G. Kenyon, ed., *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (London, 1898), II, 30-31.

<sup>32</sup> Evelyn Ashley, *The Life of Henry F. Temple, Viscount Palmerston, 1846-1865* (London, 1876), I, 270.

interpret. As stated before, Englishmen wanted peace in France so that they might trade. Moreover, they could not permit the establishment of a "Red" republic in Paris. Economic conditions were so bad at the time that resistance movements in a number of French departments seemed to presage a social upheaval. This threat of socialism in France horrified the middle-class and conservative Englishmen. In summing up the British point of view, the *Times* asserted: "The continent of Europe stands in arms, not against France, nor against LOUIS NAPOLEON, but against the uncertain and the unknown which lies beyond him."<sup>33</sup>

Thus business inactivity, as well as the fear of radicalism, motivated the British eagerness to have some kind of political stability established in France. "Seldom have the expectations entertained at the beginning of any year been more conspicuously disappointed than those that were entertained in the year that had just ended," stated one of Liverpool's largest firms in its report. "We had looked forward, all of us, to a year of exceptional prosperity, but instead of this, we have had one of the most discouraging years for a quarter of a century."<sup>34</sup> These "bad times," according to many Englishmen, could be obliterated through the maintenance of good relations between France and England and the re-establishment of tranquillity in France. "We desire nothing more cordially than that both nations may live in plenteousness as well as in peace," stated the *Times*. "The well-being of one country

<sup>33</sup> Oct. 27, 1851, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

becomes yearly to be more intimately connected with the well-being of the other."<sup>35</sup> This feeling was shared by the British cabinet. In a dispatch to the British foreign secretary, Walewski, the French ambassador at London, acknowledged receipt of a communication assuring him of the desire of the British government "to put an end to all things that disturb the tranquillity of France . . . and to attain a desirable end for the sake of justice and of the public order in general, and also for the sake of good relations which have *always* existed between our countries."<sup>36</sup>

Without popular support in France and in England, the National Assembly was doomed. Conservatives, in an attempt to prevent its overthrow, tried to pass a bill which would give them control over the Army and thus afford them protection from the masses. In commenting on this political move, the *Times* reported that "these legislative heroes were afraid to sleep in their beds and sought a night's lodging under the inviolable roof of the Assembly itself."<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile a Republican-Bonapartist bloc defeated the proposal by a huge majority, whereupon the British press noted with satisfaction this signal victory of Louis Napoleon over the National Assembly.<sup>38</sup>

After the failure of the army bill, stocks began to rise on the Bourse. This recovery was immediately

<sup>35</sup> Oct. 10, 1851, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Walewski to Palmerston, Oct. 29, 1851, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27,

917.

<sup>37</sup> Nov. 19, 1851, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Times*, Nov. 24, 1851, p. 4; *Economist*, IX (Nov. 22, 1851), 1288; *Illustrated London News*, XIX (Nov. 22, 1851), 611.

explained by the *Illustrated London News* as the natural result of the Assembly's defeat.<sup>39</sup> This same paper and the *Times*, also, predicted the overthrow of the legislative body by a *coup d'état*. The *Times* stated: "People in England as well as in France are tired of the constant struggles between the President and the Assembly. Moreover, there is a pronounced feeling in England that financial conditions would be much better if the French political squabble were settled by a successful *coup d'état*."<sup>40</sup>

Another attempt of the conservatives to tie the President's hands tended to make economic conditions worse and to strengthen British support of Louis Napoleon. The result of the new maneuver of the Assembly, asserted the *Economist*, "lowered the prices of government securities, including our own, in nearly all the markets of Europe."<sup>41</sup> This economic journal even went so far as to maintain that Louis Napoleon was "the guardian of order and is recognized as such in every stock exchange of Europe."

The blow came on December 2. In the early dawn Paris awoke to find governmental decrees plastered on all the billboards of the city, informing the citizens that Louis Napoleon had dissolved the National Assembly and repealed the hated May Law. An election was to be held in which the people would vote on the above action and on an added proviso that would elect Louis Napoleon Prince-President for a term of ten years.

<sup>39</sup> XIX (Nov. 22, 1851), 614.

<sup>40</sup> Nov. 19, 1851, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> IX (Nov. 29, 1851), 1377.



The conspiracy was successful; the *coup d'état* had triumphed; and Louis Napoleon had transformed France from a republic to an empire. ✓

A majority of Frenchmen approved the coup. The workingmen were especially elated that they would be permitted to vote again.<sup>42</sup> Businessmen in both France and England were gleefully satisfied that this political upheaval would result in ending the threat of socialism and consequently bring about a revival of trade with a spurt in profits.<sup>43</sup> Prior to this event French businessmen had been tortured by rumors of the business panic, chaos, and bankruptcy that would accompany the elections to be held in May of the following year (1852). Walter Bagehot, the political economist, who was in Paris at the time of the coup, reflected this fear when he wrote: "The tradespeople talked of May, '52, as if it were the end of the world. Civilization and Socialism might probably endure, but buying and selling would surely come to an end. . . ."<sup>44</sup> Capitalists and industrialists were of the same opinion. In France they were convinced that it was only by "such an absolute and military authority as [Louis Napoleon] has seized that trade in France and England can be preserved and property respected."<sup>45</sup>

Thus the *coup d'état* and the economic revival that

<sup>42</sup> *Times*, Dec. 3, 1851, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>44</sup> *Literary Studies* (2nd ed.; London, 1879), I, 311. See also Alexis de Tocqueville, *Memoirs, Letters and Remains . . . tr. from the French by the Translator of Napoleon's Correspondence with King Joseph* (Boston, 1862), II, 166.

<sup>45</sup> *Economist*, IX (Dec. 13, 1851), 1369.

followed it brought joy to the French bourgeoisie. "The gay city of Paris," wrote an Englishman in that city, "is even gayer than usual. . . . The funds continue to rise. . . . Satisfaction is on every countenance. . . . The shopkeepers are in high spirits. The prospect of that dearest of all objects, a full till, opened out before them. . . . they begin to love their business much better than they love theories of government."<sup>46</sup>

It is true that the working classes of Paris received the notices of the coup with indifference; and in some of the cities, for example Marseilles and Lyons, the people were impassive. As a whole France accepted the political upheaval with a smile of relief. Fear of a socialist revolution in 1852 had been dissipated; the masses had gained the ballot; and the bourgeoisie looked forward to a business boom. Little wonder then that most French people, grateful for all these gains, enthusiastically supported their benefactor. Both monarchists and socialists acknowledged the President's power at this time. One of the royalist leaders, the Duc de Broglie, cynically summed up his own conception of the coup when he said: "The people have the government it prefers, and the *bourgeoisie* the government it deserves."<sup>47</sup> Proudhon, a French social revolutionary, confirmed this statement and declared Napoleon III to be, "if not the product of the national will at least . . . that of the national permission."<sup>48</sup>

What was the British interpretation of the *coup*

<sup>46</sup> *Illustrated London News*, XIX (Dec. 27, 1851), 761-62.

<sup>47</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.



*d'état*? The great majority of businessmen believed that it would bring about an economic recovery in both countries and would prevent a possible socialist revolution after the regular election of May, 1852. The business revival that followed the coup confirmed the beliefs of the middle classes.<sup>49</sup> On December 6 the *Economist* summed up their point of view:

. . . the great French difficulty which has so long loomed like a dim and gigantic terror through the mist, has met with its solution. . . . The year 1852, which, a week ago, everyone expected to be a year of convulsion, turbulence, and strife, and therefore a year of deranged commerce, impeded industry, and popular suffering, may, and probably will, be a year of profound peace and general prosperity.<sup>50</sup>

The British government, however, received the news of the *coup d'état* calmly. Queen Victoria instructed her ambassador, Normanby, to say little and to take no part in proceedings. But the wilful Palmerston refused to follow this course. Instead, he immediately expressed his personal approval. This show of independence helped to precipitate his dismissal from the Foreign Office, and gave a few English newspapers which had generally disliked continental tyranny an opportunity "to vent their criticism on an act which had no bearing on the removal."<sup>51</sup> Normanby's role in

<sup>49</sup> *Economist*, IX (Dec. 13, 1851), 1379.

<sup>50</sup> IX, 1344.

<sup>51</sup> Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 165; Walewski to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dec. 26, 1851, *Archives des affaires étrangères (Angleterre)*, Vol. 684, Fol. 131-33; Walewski to Turgot, Jan. 6, 1852, *ibid.*, Fol. 154-60; these documents will be referred to hereinafter as *AAE (A)*.

the affair reveals his petty jealousy of Palmerston and his own inconsistencies. As early as 1849 he had informed the British foreign minister that the constitution of France could not last, "for it prevented beneficial change."<sup>52</sup> At that time his solution of the political problem in France was a *coup d'état*. Again, in 1850, Normanby approved of a Napoleonic *putsch* in another confidential dispatch to Palmerston. But when the English ambassador received the Queen's instructions and was told of Palmerston's unauthorized acceptance of the coup, Normanby took advantage of the situation to denounce publicly his superior. The Queen, upon hearing of the discrepancy between her instructions and Palmerston's utterances, used the incident as an excuse to get rid of a man she did not like—not because his views were contrary to hers, but because a cabinet minister had overstepped his authority by approving an important political event before consulting the government.

After his dismissal Palmerston openly stated in a letter to Lord John Russell that Normanby's statement that "he [Palmerston] entirely approved" of the coup was "highly colored." Palmerston admitted that a struggle between Louis Napoleon and the Assembly was inevitable, and that between the two he felt "the interests of France and . . . the rest of Europe" would be better served by the victory of the President. Moreover, the general economic recovery in France since the

<sup>52</sup> Normanby to Palmerston, July 23, 1849, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 846 (secret and confidential).

coup indicated that the French people in general were of the same opinion. They realized, as he did, that the Assembly lacked leaders, and therefore, if victorious, this body "would lead France to the brink of anarchy." Louis Napoleon capitalized on this situation; Palmerston continued: "There is no doubt that he was impelled by ambition and by a Rooted Belief which he is well known to have entertained from a very early age, that he was destined to govern France. But he may also have felt that in the present deplorable state of society in France he was much more capable of promoting the interests of his country, than his antagonists were. . . ." <sup>53</sup>

Following the dismissal of Palmerston, the newly appointed minister of foreign affairs, Lord Granville, called upon Walewski, the French ambassador, to inform him that Lord John Russell had asked Granville to give the French government definite assurance that this governmental change would not alter the friendly relations between the two countries, and that England was "anxious to see a stable government in France and to remain on the most friendly footing with the Prince-President." <sup>54</sup>

Simpson declares that British public opinion, influenced by the governmental handling of Palmerston's

<sup>53</sup> Palmerston to Russell, Dec. 16, 1851, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 22, 9 (Russell papers); also, Walewski to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dec. 5, 1851, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 684, Fol. 100-101.

<sup>54</sup> Walewski to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dec. 26, 1851, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 684, Fol. 131-33; Walewski to Turgot, Jan. 6, 1852, *ibid.*, Fol. 154-60; and Granville to Normanby, Dec. 26, 1851, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 215.

"indiscretion," bitterly condemned the *coup d'état*.<sup>55</sup> This interpretation can be challenged. Although the British government was not so sympathetic toward Louis Napoleon's overthrow of the Assembly as were the middle classes, it did, with relief, see in his dictatorship the end of a revolutionary era in France.<sup>56</sup>

A number of London newspapers, especially those that supported Palmerston's policies, declared themselves very much in favor of the coup. The *Economist* boldly stated that it had expected such an event for some time and that the circumstances justified Louis Napoleon's course of action. Wrote the editor: "He [Louis Napoleon] has borne much; he has waited long; and he has now acted with a degree of skill, promptitude, and vigour, which will secure to him much admiration and no little sympathy. . . . his personal objects so much harmonized with the apparent interests of the country—that a strong feeling has everywhere been growing up in his favour."<sup>57</sup> In the same issue of the *Economist*, the editor maintained that Paris and France had accepted Louis Napoleon and that "the middle classes of the metropolis, . . . desire above all things a strong and stable government."<sup>58</sup> In commenting of the *coup d'état*, the *Illustrated London News* also emphasized its inevitability. France had no choice, for it was ". . . Louis Napoleon and compara-

<sup>55</sup> *Louis Napoleon and the Recovery of France*, pp. 165-66.

<sup>56</sup> Walewski to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dec. 23, 1851, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 684, Fol. 127-30.

<sup>57</sup> IX (Dec. 6, 1851), 1341-42.

<sup>58</sup> P. 1344.

tive repose on the one hand, or the most fearful anarchy and civil war . . . on the other.”<sup>59</sup> A week later the editor insisted that the French had no liberty of choice. “‘Better,’ they say, ‘a strait-jacket than a total collapse’ . . . Louis Napoleon may prove himself as wise as he has been bold. . . . We fear, however, that this is hoping too much.”<sup>60</sup>

One important newspaper, the *Times*, suddenly changed its previously impartial attitude toward the coup and proceeded to condemn it bitterly. Delane, editor of the paper, engaged in a personal crusade against Louis Napoleon, making him the object of vindictive editorials remarkable for their brilliant invective and scornful castigation. Delane’s thesis was that France was “entering upon a period of suspicion, coercion, and suppressed or flagrant anarchy, to which even the horror of civil war may be invited to put a term.”<sup>61</sup> By January, 1852, the continual attacks of the *Times* had aroused the antagonism not only of Louis Napoleon but of English leaders as well: for example, Lord Clarendon, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, complained that the *Times*’s “battering at him every day was more . . . than was required either by public opinion at home or by English interests abroad. . . . *The Times* is doing a vast deal of harm upon French affairs.”<sup>62</sup> He also

<sup>59</sup> XIX (Dec. 13, 1851), 697.

<sup>60</sup> XIX (Dec. 20, 1851), 721-22.

<sup>61</sup> Dec. 5, 1851, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Sir Herbert Eustace Maxwell, *Life and Letters of George William Frederick, Fourth Earl of Clarendon* (London, 1913), I, 330, 343.

wrote to Henry Reeve, a *Times* correspondent in Paris, expressing the belief that the paper "went too far in denouncing that which would soon be popular in France," and he was of the opinion that it would be useless to antagonize Louis Napoleon further or to "give him the pretext that his uncle always seized upon for hostility—that public opinion in England was insulting to him. . . ."<sup>63</sup>

Just why did Delane take this stand? Certainly he was not reflecting the official attitude of the government. Granville, the British foreign minister, had assured Louis Napoleon of England's good will toward France and had told him indirectly that the *Times* "was no more the mouth piece of the government than any other paper."<sup>64</sup> Nor was Delane expressing the popular point of view. In a letter the French ambassador at London openly declared that the people of England were losing interest in the opposition of the *Times* to the Prince-President, realizing that he was largely responsible for the suppression of radicalism and of revolutions.<sup>65</sup> It would seem that Delane's bitter criticism of Louis Napoleon was the result of personal antagonism, encouraged by the knowledge that certain powerful conservative elements in the government were determined that the rise of Louis Napoleon should not result in the re-establishment of the Napoleonic Em-

<sup>63</sup> Maxwell, *op. cit.*, I, 330; Laughton, *op. cit.*, I, 243.

<sup>64</sup> Van de Meyer to the King of Belgium, Jan. 13, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, Nov. 20.

<sup>65</sup> Walewski to French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Oct. 1, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 686, Fol. 220-22.

pire, the overthrow of the balance of power, and the outbreak of another devastating war. Thus the *Times* was the vehicle used by these groups to warn Louis Napoleon to watch his step and be mindful of British interests.

Delane's sharp criticisms hit their mark. The Prince-President deeply resented these attacks upon him in "the English press." He claimed that he had only the best of intentions and asserted that his main objective was to combat radicalism. "No one admired constitutional liberty more than he did." In fact, he intended to establish that form of government in France "as soon as she should be fit to receive it."<sup>66</sup>

While the British government probably failed to take these remarks very seriously, Louis Napoleon did have English friends who were inclined to accept his words at their face value. Walter Bagehot, who was in Paris during the coup, wrote a very able defense of that event. In his letter entitled "The Dictatorship," he told of the fear of socialism which was imminent, of the effective opposition of Louis, and of the need for a dictator. In another letter on the "Morality of the Coup d'état" he declared that the political excuse for Louis Napoleon's act was that the fear and dread of what might happen in 1852 had so paralyzed life and labor that a revolution was inevitable.<sup>67</sup>

Another of Louis Napoleon's English admirers was

<sup>66</sup> Jerningham to Granville, Jan. 22, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 215, No. 24.

<sup>67</sup> Bagehot, *op. cit.*, I, 314-17.



the famous poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. She also was a visitor in Paris, and like Bagehot she wrote in defense of the coup. In a letter to an old friend she maintained that he had the sympathy of the whole population of Paris.<sup>68</sup> The attitude of the *Times* aroused Mrs. Browning's ire. In a note to her sister she cried out: "*Don't believe The Times*. To talk about 'carnage' is quite absurd. The people never rose—it was nothing but the popular scum, cleared off at once by the troops. . . ."<sup>69</sup> Apparently Mrs. Browning, like many others, did not realize that the hostile policy of the *Times* was both political and personal; that the business classes, the backbone of England, were heartily in favor of Louis Napoleon's coup; and that the government was pursuing a noncommittal policy until it could determine the role of the Prince-President and its bearing upon British interests.

<sup>68</sup> Kenyon, ed., *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, II, 36.

<sup>69</sup> Leonard Huxley, ed., *Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Letters to Her Sister*, 1846-1859 (London, 1929), p. 149.



## Bonapartism and Radicalism

THE EPIC DRAMA "Whither Bonapartism?" was moving, after fitful episodes, toward its smashing climax. Louis Napoleon had changed from costume to costume; from a plotting exile to an unsuccessful invader to a delegate in the Assembly to its President and to a successful conspirator. Now, on December 20, he unblushingly strode forth half-dressed in royal raiment, as he assumed, by election, the title of Prince-President. His French audience, half-embarrassed, half-enchanted, hoped for a resolution of the drama which would reward their sympathetic attentiveness.

Bent upon strengthening the hesitant feeling of optimism, the Prince-President became an ardent apostle of humanitarian reform, promising to "do good" for almost everyone. To those who feared revolution he guaranteed order; to haters of war he promised peace; and to patriots he outlined an aggressive foreign policy. In addition, he pledged aid to the masses; stability and security to the wealthy; suppression of radicalism to Europe; and to every simple Frenchman he pictured a

revitalized France—a country that would once more relive the glory of yesterday. Little wonder that most of the people of France “for some time, at least . . . joyfully loaded liberty with chains.”<sup>1</sup> All groups, save uncompromising extremists on the right and the left, supported the Prince-President, because they saw in him the only man able to combat those “radical doctrines” which had made France “not only the terror of herself but of all civilized governments.”<sup>2</sup>

With the domestic situation well in hand, Louis Napoleon anxiously awaited the reaction of the foreign powers. He knew that his dictatorship could not endure unless he had the support of his neighbors; and, furthermore, he realized that if they saw in his *coup d'état* a step in the direction of another Napoleonic Empire their opposition would probably bring about his fall. To his delight the Prince-President soon discovered that the great European powers considered Bonapartism the lesser of two evils, the other being radicalism. They admitted that Louis Napoleon was an important guarantor of law and order in France<sup>3</sup> and seemed willing to concede that the advantage of having stability in France, with radicalism effectively eliminated, far outweighed any danger of a return to Bonapartism.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charlemagne Émile de Maupas, *The Story of the Coup d'État*, translated by Albert Vandam (New York, 1884), p. 477.

<sup>2</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, March 1, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 929, No. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Oct. 4, 1852, *ibid.*, 937, No. 60.

<sup>4</sup> “One of the first Effects of the 2nd of December has been to cast consternation among the enemies of all Social Order in Europe.”—Milbanke to Granville, Jan. 8, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20 (private).

Most enthusiastic supporters of Louis Napoleon's opposition to radicalism were the so-called Northern Courts (Austria, Prussia, and Russia). M. Hübner, the Austrian minister at Paris, had expressed some time before the satisfaction of his government at the "energy with which the President of the French Republic had repressed the anarchical movement in France."<sup>5</sup> He also assured the Prince-President that as long as Louis Napoleon opposed radicalism, kept the peace, respected treaties, and did not extend his frontiers, the Austrian government would maintain the most friendly relations with him. Prussia and Russia expressed similar views, although Czar Nicholas of Russia even went so far as to assert that "the President of the Republic merits the recognition of Europe and of all France, for he has done more for that continent than the statesmen of the two reigns, more than all of us; and if he follows exactly his political program without being influenced by 'vulgar ambitions,' he will be placed above every contemporary in European politics and in History."<sup>6</sup>

On the whole, there was satisfaction in Europe and in England over the political upheaval in France,<sup>7</sup> and this approval was strengthened by the fact that a rise of stocks and a sudden spring of commerce following

<sup>5</sup> Papers of M. Jerningham, Jan. 23, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 924, No. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Jean d'Eudeville, "L'Avènement du Second Empire et les traités de 1815," *Revue de Paris*, XLIII:5 (Sept. 1, 1936), No. 17, 98-99.

<sup>7</sup> "Heaven," said Pius IX of the *coup d'état*, "has just paid the debt of the church toward France."—Collins, *Catholicism and the Second French Republic*, p. 325.

the coup presaged a return to economic stability and prosperity in that country.

One question restrained England and the European powers from giving Louis Napoleon a vote of complete confidence. Would the Prince-President, they asked, ignore the imperialist phase of the Napoleonic program and concentrate upon domestic affairs? Fear of Bonapartist imperialism and its partner—war—haunted most statesmen after the coup, and this fear was heightened in 1852 by several crises involving France.

Of these, the Belgian incident was especially significant. Belgium (and the Rhenish provinces) had long been the goal of French rulers, and as a result was one of Europe's perennial trouble spots. The overthrow of Louis Philippe and the rise of Louis Napoleon made no change in the status of this problem, and following the *coup d'état* of 1851 the fear of another French invasion began to assert itself, especially in Belgium.<sup>8</sup> Circulation of false rumors served to increase the tenseness of the situation. Brussels expected to see a notice of annexation appear in the *Moniteur* any day, "... while a certain Belgian newspaper editor was said to have an authentic copy of that decree."<sup>9</sup> Persigny, about to be appointed minister of the interior in France, helped to make the Belgian affair a matter of general concern when he remarked that the provinces of the

<sup>8</sup> Walden to Granville, Feb. 13, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20 (private); also, Sir Henry Ellis, Memorandum of Conversation with Van de Meyer on Feb. 14 *in re* relations between France and Belgium, Feb. 15, 1852, *loc. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Gustave Rothan, *Souvenirs diplomatiques; l'Europe et l'avènement du Second Empire* (Paris, 1892), p. 328.

Rhine should be annexed to show Europe who was master.<sup>10</sup> Some Frenchmen believed that French action in Belgium was necessary in order to enable her to forget her shame at home by arousing her interest in matters abroad. Other proponents of French intervention emphasized the geographical and industrial importance of these regions and maintained that Louis Napoleon must acquire them if he really intended to make France a powerful industrial state. The Prince-President, however, carefully refrained from discussing the Belgian problem. Undoubtedly he would have welcomed the acquisition of this valuable territory, but he also knew that France was in no way prepared to get it by force.

Despite the absence of any official action by the French government, the king of Belgium and his friends (some of them English) were convinced that Louis Napoleon intended to take over Belgium and other territories. Accordingly, in December, the Belgian monarch asked the Northern Courts *not* to recognize Louis Napoleon as Prince-President. "I have reason to know," said Leopold, "that [Louis Napoleon] intended to copy the decrees by which his uncle annexed to France first Holland and afterwards the provinces at the mouths of the Weser and the Elbe."<sup>11</sup> Appar-

<sup>10</sup> Henry Williams Edmund Petty Fitzmaurice, 6th Marquis of Lansdowne, *The Secret of the Coup d'État, 1848-1852* (London, 1924), p. 185.

<sup>11</sup> Nassau William Senior, *Conversations with M. Theirs, M. Guizot, and Other Distinguished Persons during the Second Empire* (London, 1878), I, 88. On April 20, 1852, King Leopold warned England of the Napoleonic menace and begged her to enter into an alliance

ently the Northern Courts were not overly impressed by Leopold's predictions, for they accepted the political change brought about by the *coup d'état*.

England's noncommittal attitude toward Louis Napoleon following the coup was based wholly on her determination not to express wholehearted endorsement until she was certain that the Prince-President intended to recognize the territorial *status quo* in Europe. She disapproved of the elimination of constitutional government in France, but was willing to accept the Napoleonic dictatorship, provided it did not lead to the overturn of the balance of power and to the rise of an aggressive industrial rival across the Channel.

The Belgian crisis afforded the British an opportunity to give the Prince-President a definite warning. Acting to check any plans Louis Napoleon might have with regard to Belgium, the British foreign secretary asked Lord Cowley, British ambassador at Paris, to communicate with Prussia and Russia and to protest solemnly any infractions of treaty engagements.<sup>12</sup> In the following month (March) the Russian minister proposed the establishment of a "quadruple alliance" against France.<sup>13</sup>

These activities convinced the Prince-President that all of the great European states would oppose any at-

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with Russia and Prussia to check the Prince-President's imperialist designs.—King of the Belgians to Russell, April 20, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 22, 10 (Russell papers).

<sup>12</sup> Granville to Cowley, Feb. 20, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 920, No. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, March 30, 1852, *ibid.*, 924, No. 43.

tempt on his part to intervene in Belgium and in the Rhenish provinces. Louis Napoleon was especially aware of the British position. Moved by England's fear of French aggression, the Prince-President, shortly after the coup, announced his determination "not to go beyond France's boundaries." He professed not to want war and promised not to interfere with the internal governments of Belgium, Switzerland, and Sardinia. At the same time, forgetting his own exile in England, he expressed his view that all refugees, "planning insurrections in their sanctuaries, close to their own frontiers, should be removed."<sup>14</sup> The British foreign secretary, taken in by this statement, wrote to his ambassador at Berlin that "if the President even contemplated an invasion of Belgium, he has, I think, relinquished the idea for the present, being made aware that from no quarter will he receive encouragement, but probably resistance from every power of consequence in Europe."<sup>15</sup>

The Belgians, however, seemed determined to provoke a crisis. In September their violent newspaper attacks on the imperialist ambitions of the Prince-President caused him to threaten the occupation of their country. In commenting on this flare-up, Lord Cowley, the British ambassador, maintained that the real reason

<sup>14</sup> Memorandum of Granville on conversation with M. de Flahault concerning the Prince-President's policy toward Belgium, etc., Jan. 3, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 18; also, Van de Meyer to the King of the Belgians *in re* conversation with M. de Morny, the President and M. Turgot, Jan. 13, 1852, *ibid.*, 29, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Earl of Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister* (London, 1884), I, 322.



for the French threat was Belgium's attempt to raise the duty on coal sent to her neighbor.<sup>16</sup> A month later Lord Derby in a letter to Malmesbury was fearful of trouble between France and Belgium.<sup>17</sup> Malmesbury replied that most of the reports concerning the affair were mere rumors, and that as yet he had no proof of Louis Napoleon's sinister intention.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, he opined that the Prince did not intend to repeat his uncle's mistake by permitting a situation to develop which would lead to a break with England. In his view those Englishmen, including Derby, who believed that the Prince-President was planning an invasion of England as well as of Belgium were badly mistaken.<sup>19</sup>

On October 9 Louis Napoleon again extended himself to dispel the "universal apprehension" of French foreign policy. In a speech delivered at Bordeaux, he emphatically denied any warlike intentions. Most European diplomats by then were willing to accept this statement, knowing full well that the odds did not favor a French invasion of Belgium. Nevertheless, there still existed in England a strong feeling that the Prince-President might at any time resort to war. This attitude was reinforced by the imperialistic implications of Louis Napoleon's attempts to suppress radicalism—not only at home but also in neighboring countries.

From June, 1849, until the *coup d'état* of 1851,

<sup>16</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Sept. 2, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 937, No. 514.

<sup>17</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 353.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>19</sup> Derby expressed his fears in a letter to Malmesbury; see Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 353.



radical parties within France had been preparing for an attempt to establish a revolutionary government. Without their leaders (who had been forced into exile by Louis Napoleon) these extremists were no real threat. Nevertheless, their continued machinations presented the French government with its worst nightmare and best political scapegoats; Louis Napoleon saw them as a swift and sure vehicle to personal power.

Expulsion of radicals from France, the Germanies, and Italy made the problem of the refugees a matter of international concern. Following the revolutions of 1848 in these states, a steadily increasing number of radicals—republicans and socialists—were forced to leave their native lands and find homes in such “alien” countries as Switzerland, Belgium, and England. So many of them finally settled in England that by the summer of 1849 London began to look like a refugee capital. Socialists Louis Blanc, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels had established quarters, to be followed by many other celebrated exiles. Among Belgium’s most famous temporary residents were the social revolutionaries Proudhon and Herzen, who for a short while collaborated in the publication of a radical journal.<sup>20</sup> These exiles were barely tolerated by the various governments under whose jurisdiction they came. Liberals in several states, however, did try to help them. In England, for example, advocates of freedom held sympathy meetings and even offered financial aid. Es-

<sup>20</sup> Raoul Labry, *Herzen et Proudhon* (Paris, 1928), pp. 88-89, 95-96.

pecially noteworthy was the cordial reception given the famous Italian republican, Mazzini, who was welcomed by all shades of British opinion when he arrived late in 1849.

From the first many of these refugees used their temporary domiciles as propaganda centers from which they attempted to discredit if not to overthrow their enemies at home. These agitations, in England, in the Channel Islands (where exile Victor Hugo lived), in Belgium, and in Switzerland, caused especial anxiety to the French bourgeoisie, to Louis Napoleon, and to his police. Investigations by the French secret service indicated that German democrats were constantly working in the Germanies and in London to create a revolutionary movement powerful enough to start a conflagration. There was also evidence of anarchical action in the Italian states. In all of these countries the radicals were waiting for their comrades in France to start "the revolution."<sup>21</sup>

Aroused by this situation and fortified in spirit by his *coup d'état* of 1851, Louis Napoleon determined to strike. England was informed of the departure of certain socialists who intended to get in touch with refugees in London. Watch them carefully, England was warned, for they have but one objective in mind—"a conspiracy against the social order."<sup>22</sup> A further dec-

<sup>21</sup> Confidential communication from the Prefect of Police (Paris) to the Minister of the Interior, June 21, 1851, PRO, FO (France), 27, 916 (copy).

<sup>22</sup> Walewski to Palmerston, Aug. 15, 1851, PRO, FO (France), 27, 916.

laration warned that if such agitations continued the French government might be forced to insist upon the removal of all these dangerous persons from regions near her frontiers.<sup>23</sup> This threat failed to silence the refugees, who instead, as if spurred by the Prince-President's threats, increased their zealous activity against "the cruel Bonapartist dictator."

One European nation, England, refused to regard the exile question as an isolated matter. Despite her hostility to radicalism she was conscious of the fact that Louis Napoleon might be looking for an excuse to intervene in near-by lands, and that his aspirations, therefore, in Belgium and his desire to control the refugee problem in other countries, including Belgium, were related. As a result, differences over the question soon threatened to undermine the friendly relations which had existed between England and France ever since Louis Napoleon's rise to power.

Prior to the coup the Prince-President had adopted a moderate position in the matter.<sup>24</sup> France, he said, did not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of neighboring states, but she did feel that she must insist upon the removal of the most violent of the refugees to a safe distance.<sup>25</sup> About the middle of January stronger representations were made. On January 13, 1852, Louis Napoleon was reported to have said that the Northern Courts were urging France to lead in some

<sup>23</sup> Lansdowne, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>24</sup> Walewski to Palmerston, Sept. 2, 1851, *AAE (A)*, 683, 190.

<sup>25</sup> Memorandum by Granville of conversations with Flahault, Jan. 3, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 30.

kind of united action to repress the radicals in Belgium and in Switzerland. At the same time the Prince-President intimated that he would resist such suggestions, that he would give no guarantee as to his future actions if the "activities" of the "trouble makers" in the border states did not cease.<sup>26</sup>

One week later Granville, the British foreign minister, in a letter to his ambassador at Paris, expressed concern over a note he had received from Walewski about the necessity of active measures against Belgium and Switzerland. England, said the British statesman, was moved not merely because the letter on the exile problem was an official communication from France, but also because she believed that "the presentation of the note on the subject of the refugees was part of a combined scheme with three other powers."<sup>27</sup> In short, it would seem, said Granville, that Austria, Russia, and Prussia (the three other powers) were co-operating with the French in the matter. The exact nature and importance of the agreement was not known, but Granville felt certain that the British policy of maintaining the neutrality of these border states and of preventing the formation of a powerful European alliance that would include France was threatened. This alliance failed to materialize. During the first part of February British fears were slightly relieved when it became known that Austria's attempt to induce Russia to join

<sup>26</sup> Memorandum by Van de Meyer of conversation between Morny, Louis Napoleon, and Turgot, Jan. 13, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20.

<sup>27</sup> Granville to Jerningham, Jan. 20, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 215, No. 23.

with France and Prussia in a specific action against Switzerland had failed. Russia's refusal to work with the other Northern Courts removed for the time being the threatened isolation of England.<sup>28</sup>

Despite his failure to gain the support of his eastern neighbors, Louis Napoleon continued his controversy with England over the refugee problem. On February 20 Cowley was advised by the British Foreign Office that the British attitude toward the exiles was unchanged. He was also told that the Swiss government was doing everything possible to appease French demands and was instructed to inform the French foreign minister that Her Majesty's government would continue to advise the Swiss to adopt a moderate and reasonable course.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout February England was instrumental in preventing any real crisis from rising out of the refugee muddle in Belgium and in Switzerland. Toward the close of the month France, however, assumed a more truculent attitude. On February 25 Turgot, the French minister of foreign affairs, asserted that Switzerland was still pursuing "its irritating conduct toward France," an attitude that was not merely the result of the refugee question, but was actually evidence of a "fixed idea" upon the part of the Swiss government to annoy and to insult France. French Jews, for example, had been expelled from Basel, yet the various

<sup>28</sup> Memorandum of Granville, Feb. 5, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 27, 924, No. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Granville to Cowley, Feb. 20, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 924, No. 12.

Swiss cantons had remained hotbeds of socialist activity. Because of this situation France was determined that once she demanded the expulsion of the radicals she would not back down, although she would do everything in her power to prevent a military occupation of Switzerland.<sup>30</sup> Louis Napoleon was conveniently ignoring an earlier occasion when Louis Philippe had insisted on his expulsion from Switzerland. At any rate the statement by the French foreign minister convinced the British ambassador that France was determined to use the refugee problem as a subterfuge to impose on Switzerland a government similar to the one being established in France, and to make her at least a satellite state.

Aroused by this interplay, the *Times* increased its vicious attacks upon Louis Napoleon, despite the bitter complaints of the French government. "Terror gives him support," said this newspaper in editorials appearing on January 13 and January 23, 1852. "Terror made possible the cruel expulsion of the people of all classes from France. . . . The army . . . has become the executioner of France; the middle classes are terrified and silent, the lower classes careless and acquiescent." These attacks served only to heighten the tension. During the early part of 1852 London received a steady stream of protests. The Northern Courts as well as France condemned radical activities and opposed the presence of refugees in England.

Despite many protests the British government, even

<sup>30</sup> Cowley to Granville, Feb. 25, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 927, No. 20.



though it was hostile to the ideologies of most of these exiles, refused to oppress them in any way. "By existing law of Great Britain," said Granville, in a letter to the British ambassador at Paris, "all foreigners have the unrestricted right of entrance and residence in this country; and while they remain in it, are equally with British subjects under the protection of the law."<sup>31</sup> Any attempt to repeal these laws, the statement continued, would lead to popular outbursts from the British citizenry. This right of asylum has been traditional in England, and kings and princes of the Bourbon and Orleans houses as well as Louis Napoleon himself have used it in the past. Therefore, he concluded: "While Her Majesty's Government cannot consent, at the request of foreign governments, to propose a change in the laws of England, they would not only regret, but would highly condemn, any attempts on the part of foreign refugees in England to incite insurrection against the governments of their respective countries."

In a reply to Granville's letters, Jerningham, the British ambassador at Paris, minimized the importance of the disagreement when he wrote: "The dangers of socialism have always appeared to me enormously exaggerated. I believe that the French socialists here have no more real power than the English chartists. It is merely impotence on a larger scale. They would have been crushed in May, 1852 as they have been in December, 1851. . . . But the power of the socialists may

<sup>31</sup> Granville to Jerningham (attaché at Paris), Jan. 13, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 924, No. 8.



have been exaggerated by the government for the very purpose of causing the panic which has in great part paved the way to arbitrary power. . . . Panic, however, is transitory. The very existence of society seems to prove the impotence of socialism."<sup>32</sup> Even the Prince-President indirectly admitted that the affair of the exiles was largely a *tour de force* when he said to Lord Cowley that it was "impossible for the English nation . . . or press, to approve of his autocratic measures," and that "he was not at all astonished or angry at the criticism of his conduct."<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile Louis Napoleon continued to exert pressure upon the Swiss, threatening possible intervention if the refugees were not chased from the land. Finally, on March 5 the British government decided to call the French bluff. France was informed of England's intention to urge Louis Napoleon's neighbors to follow a policy of moderation and reasonableness; but, at the same time, the British government wanted it clearly understood that England would not hesitate to advise Switzerland *not* to make any concessions that would destroy her independence and invalidate her neutrality—"a neutrality that is essential to the welfare of all Europe and above all nations to France itself."<sup>34</sup>

This unequivocal statement calmed the troubled waters somewhat, although France still insisted that

<sup>32</sup> Jerningham to Granville, Jan. 20, 1852, *PRO, FO (France)*, 227, 928, No. 58.

<sup>33</sup> Cowley to Granville, Feb. 10, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 929, No. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Granville to Cowley, March 5, 1852, *ibid.*, 924, No. 9.

Switzerland was in danger of going socialist as a result of British opposition to the French program of intervention. By the end of March France had withdrawn her demands. At that time Louis Napoleon was encountering the bitter opposition of the Northern Courts to his intention of assuming the title of Emperor, and therefore he wanted to do everything in his power to obtain the backing of England. Moreover, when in the latter part of March the Prince-President heard of a reputed conversation between the Russian ambassador at Paris and Lord Cowley of England, in which the former had proposed a four-power alliance to prevent a French invasion of Belgium, he visualized the establishment of an alliance that would isolate France and ruin his imperial dream. Wisely, he decided to end the tension over the refugee question and to concentrate upon domestic affairs.

If Louis Napoleon had been able to follow his real inclinations at this time he would have granted a general amnesty to all radicals, excluding only a few French extremists.<sup>35</sup> But his advisers opposed this policy. In August the matter came up again for discussion, but no amnesties were granted, for at that moment Victor Hugo's *Napoléon le Petit* appeared; and while Louis Napoleon tried to make light of it, the attack rankled and hardened his attitude toward the refugees.

During the late summer and fall of 1852 the French

<sup>35</sup> R. M. Johnston, ed., *Memoirs of 'Malakoff,' Being Extracts from the Correspondence and Papers of the Late William Edmund Johnston* (London, 1906), I, 9-10.

government continued its appeals to the English to expel or to imprison radical refugees at London or elsewhere. Renewed opposition of the refugees to the establishment of an Empire was the prime reason for these requests. In reply the British government pointed out that the actions of the French government had created and then consolidated centers of radical agitation in England. While the discussion was going on, Louis Napoleon was carrying out the final arrangements whereby his Empire was to be established—a political change that was bound to increase the resentment and agitations of all French refugees.

Presidential trips through the countryside in September, 1852, served to popularize the coming Empire and at the same time to inflame the hatred of the exiles. One feature of this expedition that caused most resentment was Louis Napoleon's practice of insuring a hearty welcome wherever he went by jailing all suspected opponents of his regime.<sup>36</sup> Strangely enough, one of the most violent attacks against Louis Napoleon at this time came from some of the moderate utopians who predicted the early assumption of the imperial title by the Prince-President and called upon all republicans to load their guns and "await the hour."<sup>37</sup> Despite the heroic tone of this appeal, the certain knowledge of the end of the

<sup>36</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Sept. 23, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 937, No. 558.

<sup>37</sup> Alexandre Quentin-Bauchart, *Études et souvenirs sur la deuxième République et le second Empire, 1848-1870, mémoires postumes* (Paris, 1901-2), II, 45.

republic threw the refugees into deeper gloom and dejection than ever before.

Finally Louis Napoleon took the expected step. On November 22, 1852, an election resulted in an overwhelming vote for him. Bending to "the will of the people," the Prince-President assumed the imperial title on December 22, 1852, and one month later, as if to test the enhanced prestige that the word *Empire* might have gained for France, the new Caesar reopened the Belgian and Swiss refugee problem.

Circulation of an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Les Limites de France* now added fuel to the controversy between England and France over the exiles. England was tremendously interested in the content of this work, for it vigorously claimed that the territorial limits of the first empire should be the true boundaries of France. Immediate inquiries by England as to the meaning of the pamphlet brought an official denial from the French government of any connection with the publication and a statement that its ideas were completely at variance with those of the Emperor.<sup>38</sup>

While the excitement over the pamphlet was subsiding, the refugee problem again fanned the flames of discord between the two nations. In a letter Cowley responded to the stern demands of the Emperor that radicalism be suppressed not only on the Continent but in England as well, and stated that he had heard but one opinion since he had been at Paris: "that we cannot

<sup>38</sup> Cowley to Russell, Jan. 3, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 961, No. 10.

refuse to do something in the matter," especially because "attempts have been made already to induce the Emperor to join in some declaration in conjunction with the Northern Powers against the abuses by the refugees of the asylum afforded them in England."<sup>39</sup>

Later Cowley seems to have obtained very strong assurances that Louis Napoleon would not carry the refugee matter too far, for the Emperor was able to promise the British government that he would not form an alliance with the Northern Courts. Louis Napoleon, wrote the British diplomat, "had too lively a recollection of the asylum which *he* had found in England. . . ."<sup>40</sup> Again Louis Napoleon had subordinated his opposition to the refugees and a possible alliance with the Northern Courts in order to obtain a general recognition of his Empire.

By the middle of March the refugee dispute still centered upon the attitude to be taken toward Switzerland. The British ambassador admitted that the Swiss problem was a difficult one for the French, and while he also conceded that there was still talk of a European concert of power that would settle the affair and isolate England, he was morally certain that the French Foreign Office would throw cold water on the idea. Cowley wrote:

Mons. Drouyn de Lhuys and his colleague, Mons. Fould, in the first conversation I had with them upon the subject, both

<sup>39</sup> Sir Herbert Maxwell, *The Life and Letters of the Earl of Clarendon*, II, 5; Cowley to Clarendon, March 4, 1853, PRO, FO (GB), 27, 964, No. 118.

<sup>40</sup> Maxwell, *op. cit.*, II, 6.

stated that the Emperor's feelings towards England would never permit him to take such a position as that which I had hinted. . . . Mons. Drouyn de Lhuys observed that it would be a poor return for the Friendship shown by England in the question of recognition of the Empire, if France had joined in a League against England after England had refused to join in a League against France.<sup>41</sup>

Cowley was quite correct in his interpretation of the French government's position in the matter. He undoubtedly knew that the strong opposition of the Northern Courts to Louis Napoleon's assumption of the title made any union between France and the Northern Courts impossible.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, there was strong French disapproval of Austria's ambitions in Switzerland. The Hapsburg government, like Louis Napoleon, had shown increasing irritation towards the Swiss since 1849 over the agitations of Italian refugees in certain cantons. By April, 1853, Austrian anger was so pronounced that strong diplomatic action seemed inevitable. Therefore she presented Switzerland with a note demanding that she suppress these refugees, or suffer territorial aggression. Switzerland immediately informed France of Austria's threat, while Austria, at the same time, with the hope of gaining French support in a move to eliminate radicalism, sent Louis Napoleon a copy of her ultimatum to Switzerland. But the Emperor opposed Austrian inter-

<sup>41</sup> Cowley to Clarendon, March 7, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 964, No. 124.

<sup>42</sup> Cowley to Clarendon, April 11, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 965, No. 228.



vention, for he questioned the Hapsburg objectives in Switzerland, just as the British suspected his. French action soon dashed Austria's hope. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French foreign minister, let it be known that France would not permit Austria to endanger the tranquillity of Europe by occupying Switzerland. Thereupon Austria gave the French government "the most positive declaration that she did not contemplate [intervention]."<sup>43</sup> From that moment France began to soften her tone toward the Swiss and to forsake her truculent attitude toward the British. On May 13 the French government expressed the opinion that Switzerland had done all that could be reasonably expected and that any differences between the two countries could be easily reconciled upon terms already laid down.<sup>44</sup>

With the danger of Austrian aggression in Switzerland virtually eliminated,<sup>45</sup> the French Foreign Office prepared to pick up the cudgels again over the refugee rumpus, but almost immediately England and France were forced to drop their differences in the necessity of facing a common threat—Russia—who menaced their dominance in the Near East. In somewhat uneasy comradeship, both governments in the summer of 1854 found it expedient to come to an understanding over the Swiss trouble. The British mission at Berne therefore

<sup>43</sup> Cowley to Clarendon, April 13, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 966, No. 235; Cowley to Clarendon, May 9, 1853, *ibid.*, 967, No. 307.

<sup>44</sup> Cowley to Clarendon, May 13, 1853, *ibid.*, No. 316.

<sup>45</sup> In 1853 Austria threatened to bring the Swiss question before the German Diet, and France immediately stated that "she would not countenance severe measures" on the part of that body.—Cowley to Clarendon, June 6, 1853, *ibid.*, 969, No. 405.



was instructed to advise Switzerland to arrange a settlement of the controversy with France.<sup>46</sup>

Officially the refugee problem had ceased to be important in April, 1854, for on the eleventh Lord Malmesbury wrote: "I look upon that cloud as nearly dissipated." Actually Louis Napoleon had abandoned his extreme policy of opposition to the exiles before he became Emperor. He knew very well that his foreign as well as his domestic policy had been something of a failure. In both the Belgian crisis and in his attempts to strengthen the position of France in the Near East he had achieved little success. Believing that the creation of the Empire was a prerequisite to any real progress for France, he determined to reconcile his policies with those of Great Britain and thereby to obtain the support of his powerful neighbor.

<sup>46</sup> Cowley to Clarendon, Aug. 22, 1854, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 1021, No. 1038.

## England and Recognition of the Second Empire

FEAR OF RUSSIA helped to bring about an Anglo-French reconciliation. By 1850 this Slavic Empire was developing an ambitious policy in the Near East and in the Far East. Austria and Prussia seemed to be amenable to Russian influence, and England faced isolation unless she could win an ally to offset a possible combination of these conservative states. France was her logical partner. After the revolutions of 1848 the Second Republic possessed the only important liberal government in Europe. She also provided a most important market for British trade. For these reasons the *coup d'état*, the Belgian crisis, and the refugee problem all failed to destroy the friendly relations which were established when Louis Napoleon came to power. A substantial section of British public opinion consistently supported the Bonapartist ruler, and, led by the able British statesman Lord Palmerston, saw the necessity of an alliance with France regardless of its form of government. True, the British cabinet after the *coup d'état* failed to welcome the Bonapartist

dictatorship with enthusiasm and firmly opposed all attempts of Louis Napoleon to change the territorial *status quo* in Europe; at the same time it very carefully avoided a situation which would result in a complete break between the two countries.

Louis Napoleon had long recognized the desirability of friendly relations with England, and his failure to have his way in the Belgian crisis and with the refugee problem served only to emphasize the need for British co-operation. Furthermore, his plan to establish a Second Empire after the *coup d'état* of 1851 strengthened his determination to achieve at least an entente with his neighbor across the Channel. He knew that the Northern Courts would object to this political change, and he was of the opinion that unless he obtained British support his imperial plans never would materialize. Accordingly the Prince-President, even while he was quarreling with England over Belgium and the refugees, prepared the way for a *rapprochement*. "You know my admiration for England," he wrote in January, 1852; "if I were able tomorrow to transport its institutions to France, I would not hesitate an instant; it is a dream that I have always held, and would have realized, if the social conditions of the two countries had not been so different."<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of the personal views of individuals in the British government, the cabinet consistently maintained a friendly attitude towards Louis Napoleon.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in a letter from the British Minister to Belgium to the King of the Belgians, Jan. 13, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, No. 20.

Lord Granville, who had succeeded the "pro-French" Palmerston as foreign minister, was considered hostile to Louis Napoleon. But after he assumed office he determined to await developments before opposing or approving Louis Napoleon's external and internal policies.<sup>2</sup> Even Lord John Russell, the prime minister who had dismissed Palmerston for talking out of turn, had his foreign minister write Lord Normanby, the British ambassador at Paris, that "Her Majesty's Government were anxious to see a stable government in France and to remain on the most friendly footing with the government of the President. That it was not for England to point out to such a country as France what institutions would suit her best." Her Majesty's government intended "to remain on a friendly footing with any government short of a socialist republic."<sup>3</sup> Normanby refused to carry out these suggestions. Disliking Louis Napoleon personally, he went out of his way to make British neutrality seem like opposition. This disobedience led to his replacement in February by Lord Cowley, who was more sympathetic towards Louis Napoleon.

The replacement of the Russell ministry, late in the same month, by the Derby government with Lord Malmesbury as foreign minister, strengthened the relationship of England and the Prince-President. Lord Malmesbury was an old friend of Louis Napoleon,

<sup>2</sup> Granville to Cowley, Feb. 20, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 215, Nos. 4, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Granville to Normanby, Jan. 26, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 215.

having visited him in the fortress of Ham.<sup>4</sup> Consequently the appointment of his friend delighted the Prince-President, who wrote: "Pray believe, my dear Lord Malmesbury, that you will always find my government frank, loyal, actuated by the most friendly sentiments, and ready to co-operate with yours in all measures for the maintenance of peace and the progress of Civilization."<sup>5</sup> The British foreign minister was also very close to Lord Palmerston and the Duke of Wellington. Both of these imperialists advised Malmesbury when he assumed office "to keep well with France."<sup>6</sup> Pleasant relationships between the two countries were further enhanced by the friendship between Count Walewski, French ambassador at London, and Lord Malmesbury, the latter commenting in his *Memoirs* on the many evenings spent with the Walewski family.

These friendly personal relationships were only indicative of the common political and economic interests that were to bring England and France together. As early as January and February of 1852 there were certain signs that such a development was on the way. On January 2 England had asked Russia to co-operate in opposing a French invasion of Belgium. Czar Nicholas I readily pledged Russia's aid, counting on the support

<sup>4</sup> Jean Gilbert Victor Fialin, Duc de Persigny, *Mémoires du duc de Persigny, publiés avec des documents inédits* (Paris, 1896), p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Arthur Wellesley, ed., *The Paris Embassy during the Second Empire; Selections from the Papers of Henry Richard Charles Wellesley, First Earl Cowley, Ambassador at Paris, 1852-1867* (London, 1928), p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, II, 317-18.

of England in maintaining the continental *status quo*. Then came news that Louis Napoleon planned the creation of the Second Empire. The Russian Czar immediately endeavored to ascertain the attitude of England toward "this scheme." Nicholas received a vague, if not discouraging, reply. Stating that he did not feel that the bans of 1815 were directed against a popularly elected Bonaparte, the British foreign minister, Granville, was of the opinion that for the various powers to discuss the matter would cause France to conclude that a hostile act was contemplated.<sup>7</sup> Apparently England did not propose to have her foreign policy identified with that of the reactionary Northern Courts. Meanwhile the Russian ambassador at London believed that the Belgian and refugee problems would prevent England and France from acting in unison, failing to conceive that British economic interests might bring the two nations into harmonious agreement.

Aware of the mutual advantage to be gained by an Anglo-French understanding, Louis Napoleon, during the early months of 1852, encouraged a conciliatory policy toward England. Circulars were printed and distributed in Paris announcing that the government intended to maintain "peace and repose." At the same time Louis Napoleon claimed that the act of December 2, 1851, had cast consternation among the enemies of all social order in Europe. But this blow given to anarchy did not mean that France would involve Eu-

<sup>7</sup> Granville's memorandum on dispatch from Brunnow, Jan. 4, 1852, PRO, FO (GD), 29, 20.

rope in a revolution or a war. Rather, wrote a British diplomat, "the President, master of the situation, will maintain externally and internally a policy [of moderation]." He intended "to encourage a prosperity favorable to the international relations of France and to strengthen the country by enlarging its resources."<sup>8</sup> On January 22 Walewski read a letter from the Prince-President to British authorities in which Louis Napoleon expressed a strong desire for peace and stated that "the name of Napoleon was not a symbol of war, but of peace, law, and order."<sup>9</sup> About two weeks later Lord Granville remarked: "I am not sure but what it would be more advantageous to us that the President should take the Imperial title."<sup>10</sup> The President's program was receiving sympathetic consideration in England.

Louis Napoleon took another important step in the direction of conciliation when, on March 29, he stated in an impressive public ceremony that he intended to abandon his dictatorial powers. So far as the British people were concerned, the effect of the Presidential announcement was quite favorable. The public wanted to believe that Louis Napoleon really intended to abandon the dictatorial role he had assumed since the coup. But the British government refused to accept such an optimistic point of view. Cowley considered the Presi-

<sup>8</sup> Milbanke to Granville, Jan. 8, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20 (private).

<sup>9</sup> Jerningham to Granville, Jan. 23, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 942, No. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Granville to Russell, Feb. 6, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20 (copy).



dent's speech a deception from first to last and "an unblushing effrontery in calling the present government a republic."<sup>11</sup> At the same time the British ambassador admitted that Louis Napoleon had used his dictatorial authority for the best interests of France. Accepting Cowley's point of view, Lord Malmesbury wrote on March 29: "I do not feel . . . that any change has taken place in his [Louis Napoleon's] ambitious intentions. . . . As to political consequences, I think the assumption by Louis Napoleon of the Imperial crown would be null. . . ."<sup>12</sup> This statement coincided with the French contention that much of Europe's fear of an Empire was unnecessary. The unscrupulous Bonapartist mouthpiece, Persigny, early in April informed Europe that it was a mistake to worry about the Empire, for the French Army and the French people wanted peace. "When they [the French people]," he wrote, "had neither men in power nor men out of power in whom they could trust, when they saw the country, torn by factions, all but the prey of communist doctrines, was it extraordinary that they should write all their suffrages in favor of one who bore the name they venerated? . . . I believe England to be above the petty distinctions of legitimacy, when compared with the happiness of the people."<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless the British government refused to be moved by slender promises

<sup>11</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, April 5, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 931, No. 113.

<sup>12</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 324.

<sup>13</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, April 11, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 931, No. 136.

and opinions. On June 2, 1852, it denied an alliance with the Northern Courts against France, but insisted that England would oppose any change in the territorial *status quo*.<sup>14</sup> As late as June 21, Lord Cowley reported a conversation he had had with M. de Turgot relative to the Empire. The French diplomat remarked at the time that imperial plans had been abandoned for the present, and while Cowley accepted this statement, again he asserted that he did not believe that "the idea of an Empire had been dropped completely."<sup>15</sup> Later developments proved that his judgment was correct.

Louis Napoleon played his cards adroitly. While loudly professing his friendship for England, he carried on a constant program of imperial education. Gradually a swing of sentiment in favor of an Empire became noticeable among the people. Shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" became more and more frequent. The eagles were restored to the Army; the imperial "N" appeared on the President's box; and his image covered one side of new coins, the other still containing the word "*République*." Impressed by this growth of Bonapartism, Cowley, on September 5, prognosticated that the Prince-President would meet with very little opposition should "he choose to make himself emperor."<sup>16</sup> Louis Napoleon himself realized that the imperial pear

<sup>14</sup> Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, June 2, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 685, 234-38.

<sup>15</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, June 21, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 934, No. 353.

<sup>16</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Sept. 5, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 927, No. 518.

would soon be ripe enough to pick. Following a successful tour of the provinces, the Prince-President delivered a speech at Bordeaux in which he frankly stated his design by saying: "*I tell you, the Empire means peace. It means peace, for France desires it: and when France is satisfied, the world has rest.*"<sup>17</sup>

This announcement of imperial intentions was well-timed so far as its effects on England and Europe were concerned. Czar Nicholas I of Russia was insulted by Louis Napoleon's arrogance, but Walewski reported from London that the assurance of peace had created a favorable impression. Even the *Times*, formerly a bitter critic of the Prince-President, began to change its tune.<sup>18</sup> England knew that another Empire was in the making. Lord Derby informed Lord Malmesbury on October 3 that "the Empire" was "fast approaching," but he assumed that Louis Napoleon would accept the demands of the Northern Powers for certain guarantees.<sup>19</sup> As for England's policy, Lord Malmesbury indirectly expressed his approval of the Empire when he wrote:

Now, since Louis Napoleon has been in power, he has lost no opportunity of showing friendly feeling. If a Consul has been disagreeable, he has had him trounced; if we wanted his help, as in Egypt and Cuba, he gave it at once. He has avoided pointedly every subject of dispute, and has with this feeling just expressed a wish again to negotiate for the exchange of

<sup>17</sup> Simpson, *Louis Napoleon and the Recovery of France*, p. 194.

<sup>18</sup> Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Oct. 13, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 686, 220-22, 231-32.

<sup>19</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 353.

the territories of Albreda and Portende. So with regard to our tariff.<sup>20</sup>

Certain influential elements in England, however, found it difficult to reconcile some of Louis Napoleon's statements. For example, at Bordeaux he claimed to be a man of peace, but in another speech at Marseilles this opportunist said that he "thought it quite appropriate for him to renew the idea, known to have been expressed by his uncle, of making the Mediterranean a French lake."<sup>21</sup> Following this declaration the British government protested vigorously the challenge to England's predominance on the sea. In reply Drouyn de Lhuys cleverly remarked that the phrase was "evidently only a 'poetical image' intended to encourage the commercial element of Marseilles."<sup>22</sup>

In October a well-organized move to establish the Empire was initiated. On the nineteenth the Senate was convoked to examine the question of restoring the title, and on November 7 it voted the famous *Senatus Consultum* which restored the Empire with Napoleon III as the new Caesar. So lacking in the element of surprise was the action that even two weeks before this momentous event the *Illustrated London News* had announced: "M. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte has been

<sup>20</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 356-57.

<sup>21</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Sept. 29, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 927, No. 572. From the first of the year, the British government, as well as the Northern Courts, had been nervous over rumors concerning the possible intervention of Louis Napoleon in Switzerland, Belgium, Sardinia, Egypt, Turkey, and even the Hawaiian Islands. See Granville to Cowley, Feb. 20, 1852, *ibid.*, 29, 215, No. 7.

<sup>22</sup> Wellesley, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

hailed by his subjects by the style and title of Napoleon III. Although not anointed, or robed, or crowned, he is, to all intents and purposes a real Emperor."<sup>23</sup> By the end of the first week of November, the Prince-President was ready to assume his new title. All that remained was the determination of the time and place of the imperial ceremony. This event, said Lord Cowley, was to occur early in December.<sup>24</sup> England had almost a month to decide upon her attitude toward the Empire.

At that time powerful groups in England still opposed the Empire, sincerely believing that it meant war. Ever since the coup of 1851 they had been afraid of another resort to arms. The frequent incidents, such as the Belgian affair, the refugee problem, the French interest in the Holy Places, and Louis Napoleon's confiscation of property of the Orleans family, had increased their dread of another Napoleonic Empire and a French war of *revanche*. In the early part of 1852 a considerable section of the British nation seemed to be in a state of nervous apprehension. Suspicions of Louis Napoleon's motives were spreading throughout the country, thanks especially to the venomous articles in the *Times*. Thus the British people found it difficult at first to accept the Prince-President's professed aims for peace. Many were convinced that he intended to avenge his uncle. They actually believed he could

<sup>23</sup> XXI (Oct. 23, 1852), 329.

<sup>24</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Nov. 2, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 929, No. 648.

easily land fifty or sixty thousand troops in England in a single night. Reports told of a French fleet being secretly built at Cherbourg; and another was said to have been discovered on the Seine.<sup>25</sup> Throughout the year these elements were greatly influenced by the panicky King Leopold of Belgium, who was continually crying: "Wolf! Wolf!"<sup>26</sup>

The British government did not take these rumors too seriously; instead it very cleverly used them as a means of stimulating interest in preparedness. Capitalizing on this dread of another war, Lord Greville cried: "How entirely necessary it is that we should be on our guard and not relax our defensive preparations."<sup>27</sup> Palmerston's policy of national defense was not discussed with great enthusiasm, and the newspapers joined in the war scare with numerous articles designed to frighten and awaken people. These agitations bearing fruit, war preparations were begun and were continued for some time.<sup>28</sup>

This alarmist propaganda failed to disturb Anglo-French relations. At first the French were slightly upset by reports of an alliance between England and the

<sup>25</sup> Basil Kingsley Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston* (London, 1924), pp. 74-75.

<sup>26</sup> Gustave Rothan, *L'Europe et l'avènement du Second Empire*, p. 369.

<sup>27</sup> Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford, eds., *The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860* (London, 1938), VI, 400.

<sup>28</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 1, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 940, No. 690. Walewski assured the French government that the British expansion of the Navy did not imply hostility to France.—Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 29, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 196-98.



Northern Courts designed to check French aggression in Belgium. But the British denied any such plan.<sup>29</sup> In commenting on the situation in October, Lord Malmesbury said: "He [Louis Napoleon] had no natural dislike for the English. Ever since I knew him, he courted their society and imitated their habits. . . . I believe that he is convinced that war with England lost his uncle the throne, and that he *means* to try *peace* with us."<sup>30</sup> On October 31 the British ambassador expressed frank approval of the Empire, but not of the hereditary claims of Louis Napoleon. "We should accept the President as Emperor *de facto in presente*," he wrote, "and should not allude to hereditary chances, retrospective or future, but leave these to the French people. . . . As to calling him Napoleon III when we had never recognized Napoleon II, it seemed absurd. . . ."<sup>31</sup> About a week later he suggested to Walewski that England recognize the new Emperor, "with a 'protest' against his retrospective rights to the throne."<sup>32</sup> Anglo-French relations appeared at that time to be on a firm foundation. Nevertheless, not all governmental officials at first were willing to share Malmesbury's desire to accept the Empire. Lord Derby, for instance, was not enthusiastic, and one writer asserts that the Derby government tried as late as November to work out a

<sup>29</sup> Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Oct. 19, 1852, *ibid.*, 28-29.

<sup>30</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 356-57.

<sup>31</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 361.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.



course of action against the Empire in co-operation with the Northern Courts.<sup>33</sup>

In November the British government took a definite stand. On the eighth Lord Derby sent a memorandum to Austria, Prussia, and Russia. In it he reiterated the traditional British policy of recognizing any government which expressed the will of the people and also asserted that he could see "no sufficient grounds for refusing on the same grounds to recognize the assumption by Louis Napoleon of the Imperial dignity." At the same time he noted that in a Presidential speech delivered on November 4, Louis Napoleon had assured the French people that the restoration of the Empire would consecrate "the conquests of '89," and would restore with liberty and reflection that which thirty-seven years ago "the entirety of Europe had overturned by force of arms." Lord Derby admitted in this memorandum that Louis Napoleon's statement might be capable of "satisfactory explanation," but "upon the face of it, the passage in question is calculated to give rise to serious thought. If it really signifies an attack upon the territorial settlements of Vienna, on which most of the history of the last thirty years is based, the great powers should take a firm stand in opposition to the plan; but in so doing, they should not hurt the sensitive French." In short, the English were of the opinion that a letter from each government stating the

<sup>33</sup> Millicent E. Clark, "British Diplomacy and the Recognition of Louis Napoleon," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, I (June, 1923), 34-35 (summary of thesis, University of London).

support of the Vienna settlements should accompany, not precede, the recognition of the Empire; it should be the result, not the condition of recognition.

Lord Derby seemed desirous of co-operating with the Northern Courts in opposing any change in the territorial *status quo* and in obtaining from Louis Napoleon a conclusive commitment to the effect that he would not upset the Vienna settlements. If the Bonapartist ruler stubbornly refused to commit himself on this matter, the European states should establish a unified opposition. All protests, to be effective, must be unanimous and collective. Such a policy, Derby believed, would force Louis Napoleon to relinquish his title; and if he refused, the "allies" should not accept a compromise. Europe must not recognize Louis Napoleon as the heir of Napoleon I.

England was not surprised when Austria, the first nation to receive this memorandum, quickly rejected it.<sup>34</sup> In a reply that was considered insulting, the Hapsburg monarchy recalled certain "troubles" that she had had in Italy and Hungary. Actually Austria did not propose to enter any agreement with her ambitious rival, Russia. Thus the proposal was killed before it had got fairly under way. Thereupon the British quickly shifted policy and leaned toward France. The opportunity to stop Louis Napoleon by an alliance between England and the Northern Courts was lost.

<sup>34</sup> British Foreign Office memorandum of communication to the governments of Austria, Prussia, Russia, Nov. 8, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 104-13.

Henceforth England seemed reconciled to the idea of the Second Empire. All that she wanted was a certain assurance concerning the meaning of the title "Napoleon III," and a guarantee that the territorial *status quo* would be maintained. Louis Napoleon's replies to these demands were cautious, but reassuring to the British ambassador, Lord Cowley. Concerning the numeral *III* which the Northern Courts opposed so bitterly, Louis Napoleon offered a very politic explanation. He pointed out that for an obvious reason he could not assume the title Napoleon I. Nor could he call himself Napoleon II, for the acceptance of that numeral by Napoleon's son had been recognized by both of the legislative bodies, and public acts and judgments had been issued over his name. Logically, Napoleon III was the title for him to assume, unless he intended to base his claim on legitimacy of descent, as had Louis XVIII; then he would have called himself Napoleon V. This explanation failed to satisfy Lord Cowley. He wanted the Prince-President to promise to recognize the reigns of Louis XVIII and Louis Philippe, or a generation's history would be voided. In reply Louis Napoleon accepted this request by stating that he "decidedly . . . recognized fully and implicitly the governments and reigns which had succeeded the Empire. . . . and that his present claim to the Imperial crown was the unanimous vote of the French people."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Wellesley, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 13, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 126-29.

Even more important was the question involving the territorial *status quo*, for Louis Napoleon's position on this matter would perhaps determine the question of war or peace on the Continent. Again Lord Cowley asked Louis Napoleon, point-blank, whether or not he intended to recognize those treaties which bound Europe together. In reply Louis Napoleon said: "I have every intention of observing them. All my acts and language have proved this to you, but you should recollect how galling these treaties are to France, and that a public and solemn declaration that I recognize them might humiliate the French nation."<sup>36</sup>

To convince the British, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French ambassador at London, pointed out to Lord Cowley that in the *Senatus Consultum* which conferred the title of Emperor upon Louis the words used were *La dignité Impériale est rétablie*, and were not *L'Empire est rétabli*, which would have been the case if full legitimacy were claimed.<sup>37</sup> In short, the assumption of the imperial title by Louis Napoleon did not signify the revival of the imperial designs of Napoleon I;<sup>38</sup> it meant the establishment of a stable government and the maintenance of peace.

These explanations seemed satisfactory to Lord Cowley. "No doubt that his [Louis Napoleon's] ex-

<sup>36</sup> Wellesley, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Nov. 15, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 939, No. 681.

<sup>38</sup> Letter of Drouyn de Lhuys, Nov. 15, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 130-31; Minister of Foreign Affairs to Walewski, Nov. 17, 1852, *ibid.*, 135-38.

planations for his reasons for taking the title of Napoleon will be weighed with impartiality by Her Majesty's government," said the ambassador. "Naturally as long as this practical interpretation was understood . . . we should not object to a cipher . . . simply relating to incidents of French history." Meanwhile Lord Malmesbury had informed the Northern Courts that the British government intended "without delay to recognize Emperor Napoleon III."<sup>39</sup> In a letter to Lord Cowley, written on November 29, Malmesbury admitted British acceptance of Napoleon III when he stated that the policy of England was "without hesitation . . . [to] acknowledge the frequent changes of government by peoples in France."<sup>40</sup>

By that time most Englishmen were ready to recognize the right of the French people to establish any kind of government.<sup>41</sup> But despite this favorable British public opinion and Louis Napoleon's overwhelming success in the election, the British government insisted that verbal statements by Louis Napoleon or his ministers were not satisfactory. These assurances had to be on paper.<sup>42</sup> Walewski, when informed of this request, was of the opinion that the French government would never give the assurances in writing.<sup>43</sup> Thereupon

<sup>39</sup> Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 27, 1852, *ibid.*, 192-94.

<sup>40</sup> Malmesbury to Cowley, Nov. 29, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 937, No. 425.

<sup>41</sup> *Times*, Dec. 2, 1852, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 370.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 371. Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 29, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 200-201 (confidential).

Lord Cowley was instructed by the British Foreign Office to have the statements made by the Prince-President and Walewski repeated at length in a note which should be sent to the French foreign minister, and to that note "Drouyn de Lhuys must reply."<sup>44</sup> If he refused, Cowley was to turn to his government for further instructions. If the French minister accepted, however, "Her Majesty's Government will receive the ratification without further remarks than those of cordial amity."<sup>45</sup>

On December 1 Lord Cowley sent a note to Drouyn de Lhuys with a memorandum of the conversation of November 11 attached, and asked for an official answer as to "whether he admitted the accuracy of [Cowley's] statement."<sup>46</sup> The French minister referred it to Louis Napoleon, and that same evening the French foreign minister replied to Cowley that the statement was satisfactory. The British ambassador immediately dispatched the note to London, saying that he considered it as binding as if the whole had been written by the French minister. In reply the British government declared that the note was acceptable and complimented the French ambassador on having "brought the thorny question . . . to a successful issue."<sup>47</sup> The British government was now ready to recognize the Second Empire.

<sup>44</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 370-71.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 371.

<sup>46</sup> Cowley to Drouyn de Lhuys, Nov. 30, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 203-6; Wellesley, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup> Wellesley, *op. cit.*, p. 13.



With England's virtual promise of recognition the only formidable opposition was overcome, and the way was clear for the actual declaration. This occurred on December 2, 1852. On that day Louis Napoleon became Napoleon III and issued a public statement in which he recognized the preceding governments in France and admitted that he inherited what they accomplished for good and for evil. "My reign does not date from 1815," he said. "It dates from the moment you communicated to me the suffrage of the nation."<sup>48</sup> Following this announcement, the diplomatic corps was notified that: "The new Emperor of the French mounts, by the grace of the Divine Providence, upon the throne, to which the almost unanimous vote of the people calls him."<sup>49</sup> Upon receipt of this pronouncement the British government recognized the second Empire.

On the day after the establishment of the new French government, Lord Malmesbury wrote to Queen Victoria, stating that Lord Cowley had "obtained a formal and written acknowledgment from the French Secretary of State of the explanations given verbally," and that, this demand having been complied with, he advised Her Majesty "to recognize the new Empire and Emperor without further reserve."<sup>50</sup> The obedient

<sup>48</sup> *Times*, Dec. 3, 1852, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Malmesbury to Walewski, Dec. 4, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 225; Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 6, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 940, No. 701; Eudeville, "L'Avènement du Second Empire et les traités de 1815," *Revue de Paris*, XLIII:5 (Sept. 1, 1936), No. 17, 105.

<sup>50</sup> Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, I, 372.



Queen immediately wrote a letter to Napoleon III, addressing him as "Sir, my brother," and signing herself as "Your imperial Majesty's good sister."<sup>51</sup> On December 6, 1852, Lord Cowley presented his official credentials in customary form; and the Second Empire, with British backing, had become a reality.

Recognition by Great Britain of Napoleon III was quickly followed by that of the smaller states, leaving the Northern Courts in an embarrassing position. Further opposition, as we shall see, was useless, and in time they accepted the "new order" in France.

Meanwhile England prepared to exploit the role she had played in the rise of Louis Napoleon. "If we had followed the same course as Austria desired," crowed Malmesbury, "we should now be, in fact, waiting for the decision of Russia, a position humiliating to ourselves and offensive to France."<sup>52</sup> Louis Napoleon recognized the importance of Britain's well-timed support. He knew that it had demolished the opposition to the Empire. Now, in place of four powers arrayed against France, as there had been in 1815, there were two "liberal" states firmly allied to each other, opposed by three weak conservative powers, who were disunited among themselves.<sup>53</sup> Louis Napoleon had gained his Empire, and England was destined to obtain lucrative diplomatic, military, and economic rewards.

<sup>51</sup> Sir Adolphus W. Ward and George Peabody Gooch, eds., *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919* (Cambridge, 1922-23), II, 339.

<sup>52</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 12, 1852, PRO, FO (GB), 27, 940, No. 718.

<sup>53</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

Great Britain's aims in recognizing the Second Empire have not been given adequate treatment. The political and military reasons rather than the economic pressures have been emphasized. That these latter were not overlooked was made clear by Louis Napoleon's ardent supporter, the Duc de Persigny, who, after visiting London in the closing months of 1852, returned to Paris and had a very interesting interview with Napoleon III. During the discussion he stated his belief that British commercial interests were responsible for England's support of the Empire.

The commercial interests there [he continued] are stronger than aristocratic pride; they dominate and will dominate more each day the government of England, and as these interests have everything to lose and nothing to gain by war with us; they have a sense of security only when they are at peace with France. . . .<sup>54</sup>

Thus, economic interests played an important role in the events that paved the way for British recognition of Napoleon III.

Apparently the French were well aware of British economic aims. Negotiations between the two countries had been carried on during September, 1852, with the purpose of arranging better commercial relations between the two countries; and in the course of this exchange of ideas, Walewski, the French ambassador, asserted that "France welcomed the rise of Louis Napoleon, for she wanted him to direct commercial relations rather than the stubborn Parliament that refused to

<sup>54</sup> Persigny, *Mémoires*, p. 212.

lower the high protective tariff.”<sup>55</sup> About three weeks after the establishment of the Empire, a *Senatus Consultum* was issued which conferred on the government “the power of altering Commercial Tariffs and of undertaking works of public utility without consulting the legislative body.”<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile a group of businessmen representing the “Chamber of Commerce” of London, led by the Lord Mayor, arrived in France bearing a “Declaration” which extended the compliments of four thousand commercial firms to the Emperor on the restoration of order and proclaimed their friendship for France and the new regime.<sup>57</sup> In this “Declaration,” the “Merchants, Bankers, Traders, and others of London” asserted that “the welfare of both nations is closely interwoven as well in a mutually advantageous and extending intercourse as in a common participation in all the improvements of art and science.” They also denounced war as futile and maintained that while the British “free press might speak harshly of the government and institutions of other countries, this does not signify hostility on the part of the government or people to France.” Moreover, “it is not for the British subjects to interfere in the internal affairs of their neighbors. All they want is peace and happiness. For these reasons the merchants have seen fit to notify the French of their friendship and to ask them to disregard attacks of the irresponsible British press.” Having pro-

<sup>55</sup> Walewski to Malmesbury, Sept. 25, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 948.

<sup>56</sup> Cowley to Russell, Dec. 30, 1852, *ibid.*, 940, No. 11.

<sup>57</sup> Persigny, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-14.

fessed their friendship for their neighbor, the British middle classes now revealed the real reason for this "Declaration," saying:

It is notorious that the two countries carry on with each other a large commercial intercourse. It is also well-known that the modification of the tariffs of the two countries in certain particulars has been and is under consideration. It is obvious that nothing is more likely to imperil the efforts of the French government to meet the English government in a friendly spirit over such a question and to carry out in France any measure which might result therefrom than the keeping up a constant sense of annoyance from England in the minds of the French people."

Thus, having declared their interest in tariff reform, the British middle classes in conclusion proclaimed "to the world that the friendship for France professed by the government" was shared by them.<sup>58</sup>

Apparently British merchants as well as British diplomats had long recognized the economic advantages that might accrue to England as a result of friendly relations with Louis Napoleon. Palmerston's foreign policy had been predicated on this belief, and despite controversies over Belgium, the refugees, and the Near East, succeeding ministries had not deviated from that

<sup>58</sup> "Declaration of the Merchants, Traders, and others of London," March 1, 1853, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 688, 257-58; representatives of England's outstanding commercial concerns signed this declaration, and a commission was appointed by them to present it personally to Napoleon III. Among the signers of this document were the Lord Mayor, John Masserman, Sir John Duke, William Gladstone, Thomas Baring, Charles Mills, Samuel Morley, and other men well known in business and political affairs.—Walewski to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, March 14, 1853 (*ibid.*, 268-69).

point of view. Now that the Empire was fabricated and the two governments were united by friendly ties, commercial, financial, and diplomatic interests in both countries saw an opportunity to benefit through co-operation. Meanwhile the Northern Courts, especially Russia, witnessed with considerable foreboding the rise of this Anglo-French bloc.

## The Northern Courts and Recognition of the Second Empire

DURING THE REVOLUTIONS of 1848, Russia was the outstanding conservative power in Europe. She alone was strong enough to resist the advance of revolutionary ideas, and when, at the close of the year, liberalism seemed doomed, she was in the vanguard of those forces seeking its destruction. Head of this autocratic Empire was Nicholas I. He was generally considered a "reactionary of reactionaries"—the potential savior of conservatism. Frightened rulers in Europe "saw in him the resolute defender of their thrones and the implacable adversary of revolution."<sup>1</sup> Russians accepted his word as law. To keep out all elements of revolutionary change was his mania. And yet, despite these reactionary policies, he permitted marked economic progress in Russia, paralleled by territorial expansion in the Near and the Far East.

This expansion, in turn, strengthened Russia's interest in European affairs. Radicalism in France as well as imperialism in England became matters of great

<sup>1</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe et l'avènement du Second Empire*, p. 301.

concern to the Czar. Nicholas was keenly conscious of the difficult problems that confronted him. But he believed that everything could be worked out if he could keep "radical" France weak, and obtain British collaboration in the Near East. Austria and Prussia, he thought, would support these policies and follow his leadership. Under these circumstances he believed that he could safely lead a movement to maintain the territorial *status quo* in Europe and oppose all forms of liberalism and radicalism. At the same time, by playing up to England, he hoped to make certain changes in the territorial set-up that would benefit Russia. For these reasons the political upheavals in France had Nicholas's closest attention. The creation of the Second French Republic in 1848 irritated him greatly, but he could not act since he had his hands full trying to cope with the revolutionary movement in Central Europe. His extreme hatred of liberalism, however, caused him to welcome Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* of 1851. "France must choose between Louis Napoleon . . . and the reds," said Nesselrode, the Russian Chancellor; "between the two the choice for all sensible men must be the friend of order."<sup>2</sup>

This Bonapartist coup received the approval of all the Northern Courts. In Vienna, Prince Schwarzenberg, Austrian Chancellor, was known to have been quite frank in encouraging Louis Napoleon to reach

<sup>2</sup> Karl Robert, graf von Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers du chancelier comte de Nesselrode, 1760-1850; extraits de ses archives* ed. Comte Anatole de Nesselrode (Paris, 1904-12), X, 79.



for the crown.<sup>3</sup> He was of the opinion that a powerful France would keep England isolated, and Louis Napoleon, grateful for Austrian aid, would co-operate with the Hapsburg monarchy in its attempt to extend its authority in the Germanies and in the Balkans.<sup>4</sup>

Austria's support of Louis Napoleon's imperial ambitions encountered strong opposition. Prussia objected to this proposal, believing that it would result in an Austro-French alliance and in her own isolation. Russia was indignant. Schwarzenberg's "intrigues," she claimed, would lead to Austrian control of the Prussian Zollverein,<sup>5</sup> to Austrian dominance over France, and to a war with England. All of these fears were dissipated by the sudden death of Prince Schwarzenberg on April 5, 1852. Russia and Prussia were relieved, while France mourned the loss of an "ardent friend."<sup>6</sup>

The passing of this Austrian diplomat increased the opposition to the Second Empire. In England and in Europe powerful groups insisted that Louis Napoleon was intent upon the revival of the old Bonapartist program of conquest, and so they favored an alliance with Russia designed to prevent this "political tragedy."

<sup>3</sup> Granville to Jerningham, Jan. 23, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 215, No. 38; Henrich Friedjung, *Österreich von 1848 bis 1860* (Stuttgart, 1908-12), II, 212.

<sup>4</sup> Granville *in re* audience with Bunsen, Feb. 5, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20. In this account of the conference Granville stated that Bunsen informed him that the Czar had refused, with Prussia, to co-operate with Austria in establishing an alliance in favor of Louis Napoleon.

<sup>5</sup> Nesselrode, *op. cit.*, X, 193-94; Foreign Office memorandum, Jan. 23, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Theodor Schiemann, *Geschichte Russlands unter Nikolaus I* (Berlin, 1904-19), IV, 255.

These men believed that Louis Napoleon intended to invade Belgium and Piedmont. One of them, in a letter to Lord Granville, went so far as to assert that "with regard to the attempts on the present territorial *status quo* of Europe, the only check really operative on the President and the French will be the conviction in their minds that *L'Europe unie s'opposera à tout envahissement*. France at this moment is over-rich in men; and, horses excepted, they are well provided with all material for war."<sup>7</sup>

Count Buol, Schwarzenberg's successor in Austria, slightly soothed the nerves of the various powers by reversing Austrian policy toward France and adopting the Russian point of view. He also requested Baron Hübner, the Hapsburg ambassador in Paris, to induce Louis Napoleon not to take the crown, not to renew the "Legion of Honor," and not to assume the title "Napoleon III."<sup>8</sup> Austria seemed determined to win the friendship of Russia and Prussia by opposing Louis Napoleon's imperialist ambitions.<sup>9</sup>

Although Nicholas I had approved of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* of 1851 and had backed the French Prince-President's war on radicalism, he opposed from the first any attempt to create another French Empire. As early as December 2, 1851, the Russian minister, Nesselrode, expressed the hope that the Prince-President would maintain peace and not become an Emperor.

<sup>7</sup> Stockmar to Granville, Feb. 9, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20 (private).

<sup>8</sup> Friedjung, *op. cit.*, II, 211-13.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 216.

"These are the conditions, *sine qua non*," he continued, "which will permit us to entertain friendly relations with him."<sup>10</sup> Nesselrode soon discovered that Louis Napoleon intended to become Emperor, whereupon the Russian diplomat submitted a unique plan to the Czar. It provided for the grant of conditional recognition of Louis Napoleon as Emperor, if he agreed to accept certain territorial safeguards and to protect the rights of the Bourbons. If he refused to accede, then he could expect to receive "half-recognition" and the complications it would cause.<sup>11</sup> In this way Russia was to inform Louis Napoleon that she was not opposed to the Empire as such, but did disapprove of the title and "what lay behind it."

"Limited recognition" now became the favorite theme of Russian diplomacy. The Czar's minister at Paris was instructed to ascertain Louis Napoleon's intentions concerning the assumption of the imperial title. He begged the Prince-President not to accept it, for, on the proclamation of the Empire, the French Army would become uncontrollable and war would be inevitable. In reply, Louis Napoleon refused to give "assurances with regard to the future" but hinted that he would supply enough work for all Frenchmen at home.<sup>12</sup>

By March, 1852, Czar Nicholas's disapproval of Louis Napoleon was quite pronounced. At first he had

<sup>10</sup> Nesselrode, *op. cit.*, X, 74.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>12</sup> Cowley to Granville, Feb. 21, 1852, PRO, FO (GD), 29, 215, No. 5.

supported the Prince-President's attempts to re-establish "law and order" through censorship of the press, the suppression of radicalism, and the establishment of a "police system"; but gradually he changed his mind. On March 2 he expressed the opinion that Louis Napoleon could not be trusted, and began to show increasing irritation at the various "imperial displays" in France.<sup>13</sup> Letters from the panicky Prussian king, Frederick William IV, contributed to the Czar's apprehension of French aggression. Henceforth communications of both rulers were filled with plans of defense and offense if Louis Napoleon should cross the Rhine. Nicholas agreed to throw 240,000 men on the Prussian frontier on short notice. Nevertheless, he hoped that the hobgoblin of war could be avoided, as he did not trust his Prussian ally.<sup>14</sup> Daily the Czar's opposition to Louis Napoleon's ambitions increased. He looked around desperately for other ways whereby this Bonapartist menace could be stopped. At one time he proposed that the royalist pretender, Henri V, be recognized as the legal claimant to the throne of France; but Prussia and Austria opposed this suggestion. In a long letter to the Czar, Frederick William urged that instead of recognizing any change, the Four Powers (England, Russia, Prussia, Austria) should issue a declaration supporting the *status quo* and the treaties, and certain territorial changes which the Czar secretly wanted to

<sup>13</sup> Gustave Rothan, "La Reconnaissance du Second Empire par les cours du nord," *Revue des deux mondes*, LXXXIX (1888), 521.

<sup>14</sup> Schiemann, *op. cit.*, IV, 254.

arrange. Meanwhile the ministers of Czar Nicholas predicted that Louis Napoleon would proclaim the Empire and then plunge Europe into war.<sup>15</sup> Whereupon the Czar determined to consult with his neighbors at Vienna and Berlin before it was too late. Arriving in Berlin on March 8, 1852, he received a cool reception. Not discouraged, he continued on to Vienna, where an agreement was reached, similar to Schwarzenberg's project. The three Northern Powers were to unite in common opposition to another Bonapartist Empire.

The plans of the allied powers were carefully worked out. First they agreed that, upon the declaration of the Empire, they would not break relations with France or declare war on her. Recognition of the new government by them would depend on the French guarantees of peace, especially the promise to maintain the territorial settlements of 1815. Then, if Louis Napoleon were recognized as Emperor, it would be because his case was considered exceptional—the Treaty of Paris which forbade the Bonapartes from ascending the French throne would not be considered abolished. Finally, if a successor were named, the powers would not be bound to accept him, reserving judgment until later.<sup>16</sup>

Nicholas hastened back to Berlin convinced that he was about to consummate a union of the Northern Courts and England under his leadership. Much to his dismay and disappointment he was unable to bring the King of Prussia into camp. Frederick William re-

<sup>15</sup> Schiemann, *op. cit.*, IV, 255.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 260.

fused to commit himself, fearing a French attack if he antagonized Louis Napoleon. Also, attempts to persuade England to enter the league failed completely. The British politely but firmly refused to be involved in any continental alliance. Despite these rebuffs, Nicholas I still tried to bring Prussia and Austria under his wing. At military reviews held in June and August, he surrounded himself with their officers and was exceedingly cordial to all of them.

French officials were well aware of the attempts to form an alliance of the Northern Courts. In response to a statement in the *Morning Chronicle* (May 20) that a convention had been reached agreeing to joint opposition of these states to the restoration, Louis Napoleon announced that "the eventualities on which it is based are not probable. Nothing indicates the necessity of any change in our institutions. France enjoys complete repose."<sup>17</sup> In reply to this assertion, a Prussian diplomat gave his "word of honor" that no agreement had been signed among the Northern Courts, and the matter was dropped.

Disregarding these signs of opposition to his plan, Nicholas I seemed convinced that he had completely isolated France. Austrian and Prussian foreign policies, he thought, were under his control; and most important, England was his ally. After the fall of Palmerston in December of 1851, the Czar actually believed that he could rely on British support in his opposition

<sup>17</sup> *Moniteur*, May 30, 1852, as quoted by Jerrold, *The Life of Napoleon III*, III, 388-89.



to Louis Napoleon.<sup>18</sup> This faith in British backing was given further encouragement when, on January 2, Britain asked Baron Brunnow, the Russian ambassador in London, for information regarding the attitude of his country in the event of an invasion of Belgium by France. Brunnow replied that he felt "convinced he [Nicholas] would make common cause with England."<sup>19</sup> He then went on to say that this view was based on instructions he had received from the Czar.

In January Russian confidence in British opposition to Louis Napoleon was slightly jarred. As early as January 4 the Russian ambassador had questioned Lord Granville on the position of his government in the event that Louis Napoleon should assume the imperial mantle. Granville, in reply, stated clearly and precisely that England acknowledged the validity of the Treaties of 1815 and would oppose the revival of "that system of neglect of treaties, aggrandisement, and conquest adopted by the Emperor Napoleon which had caused so much evil in Europe." At the same time he asserted that since conditions had changed the settlements respecting the accession of a Bonaparte to the throne, these arrangements could not apply to a member of the family "who, at any time, might by the choice of the French people be raised to rule over them." Furthermore, "it was very doubtful whether the letter of the agreement had not been broken by all the allied

<sup>18</sup> Nesselrode, *op. cit.*, X, 119-20.

<sup>19</sup> F. Max Muller, ed., *Memoirs of Baron Stockmar* (London, 1872), II, 467.



powers in the communications which they had already had with Louis Napoleon as President of the Republic." If Louis Napoleon should assume the title, Granville continued, England's action would depend on the method of adoption, on the guarantees of peace accompanying it, and on the respect for the Treaties of 1815 which it embodied. Co-operative action with the Northern Courts in handling this problem of the Empire would be impossible, as the delay would make England appear unfriendly to France and might cause the citizens of that state to accuse England of attempting to tell them what kind of government to establish.<sup>20</sup>

Brunnow, the Russian ambassador at London, refused to accept this rejection of co-operation as final. His reports to St. Petersburg continued to be filled with erroneous comments about British disapproval of Louis Napoleon's actions. On January 10, 1852, he stated that the British were arming in the presence of the French; while on the twenty-fourth, he assured Nicholas that the English prime minister had spoken recently "of the entire confidence that he placed in the pacific and conservative policies of Our August Master."<sup>21</sup> At another time he reported that the French Emperor was the subject of grave apprehension and mistrust to England.<sup>22</sup> As a result of these reports, Czar Nicholas was

<sup>20</sup> Granville *in re* communication of Brunnow, Jan. 4, 1852, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 20.

<sup>21</sup> Herbert E. Howard, "Lord Cowley on Napoleon III in 1853," *English Historical Review*, XLIX (July, 1934), 502-3.

<sup>22</sup> British fear of a French invasion was stressed by this Russian diplomat.—Nesselrode, *op. cit.*, X, 136.

convinced that England and France would never enter into any kind of an alliance or understanding. And when he received word that England agreed to support the efforts of the Russian minister in Paris to "deter" or rather "dissuade" Louis Napoleon from assuming the imperial title, Nicholas I had visions of an Anglo-Russian partnership that would settle just about everything on earth.

Russia's opposition to the creation of the Second Empire led to a number of minor disturbances. In midsummer of 1852 the Russian ambassador to Berlin, Budberg, created the first incident. Publicly campaigning against Louis Napoleon's imperial pretensions and openly calling the French ambassador "*un paysan du Danube*," this unfriendly Russian official determined to show his contempt of France by holding a formal dance and inviting everyone in the French legation save the ambassador. When M. de Varennes did the same thing to Budberg, the Russian minister became an object of ridicule. Thereupon, he quickly terminated the affair by holding a reception with the French ambassador as the guest of honor. The Prussian King declared the case closed after stating that he was glad to see the Russian ambassador taught a lesson. But M. de Varennes and numerous Frenchmen refused to forgive and forget. Henceforth relations between the Russian and French governments were decidedly cool.

Several other incidents served to increase the irritation of the French. On August 15 M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French foreign minister, invited all ambas-

sadors to participate in a celebration in honor of Napoleon's birthday. M. de Varennes in Berlin arranged for a *Te Deum* in the church, to be followed by an official banquet and a spectacular illumination of the embassy. The Prussian government determined to show its disapproval of these plans. A secret order forbade the holding of a *Te Deum*, and all Prussian officials were ordered not to attend the banquet. On the week end of the festivities there occurred a wholesale exodus of the Prussians to the country. Meanwhile, Frederick William gave the French ambassador permission to celebrate a simple mass and to hold a banquet which was attended by envoys from England, Bavaria, Baden, Belgium, and Brunswick. The Austrian representative sent his regrets, stating that since the Prussian minister would not attend, he could not.<sup>23</sup> This incident angered the entire French staff and caused repercussions in Paris.

Another disturbance brought Franco-Prussian enmity to the boiling point. In the early fall of 1852 Louis Napoleon visited the provinces and at that time made known his intention of becoming Emperor. While he was on this journey articles were published in an unfriendly paper, the *Kreuz Zeitung*, which journal was supposed to print the official details of the trip. Instead, it published long accounts, said to have been written by members of the cabinet of the King of Prussia, ridiculing the tour and condemning a German ruler, the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, who had gone

<sup>23</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe et l'avènement du Second Empire*, pp. 315-19.

out of his way to meet the Prince-President at this time. M. de Varennes vigorously protested the Prussian role in the publication of these articles, whereupon the Prussian minister disavowed them and agreed to convey the account of the incident and the French complaint to the King. Despite these protests the newspapers continued the attacks, and rumors accusing the Prussian ruler of writing some of them tended to increase the antagonism of the French.<sup>24</sup>

Prussian opposition was predicated on the belief that Louis Napoleon's tour was a definite step toward the establishment of the Empire. But the Prussian government soon discovered that it was in no position to assume the responsibility of leading such opposition, since the other small German states were not interested in the matter, and repulsed all attempts of Prussia to build up a united front. At this time Bismarck summed up the entire situation when he deplored the lack of unity that existed in the Germanies.<sup>25</sup>

Austria also reached the conclusion that she could offer little resistance to the establishment of the Empire. Prokesch, the Austrian ambassador at Berlin, admitted that Louis Napoleon was very daring and, encouraged by success, would go on and on;<sup>26</sup> while Buol, the Austrian minister, hating the very thought of a French Empire, but realizing that Austria could not offer formidable opposition, decided to assume a more

<sup>24</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, pp. 321-26.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 324, 327.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

conciliatory attitude toward France. The Second Empire, in his opinion, was inevitable.<sup>27</sup>

Nicholas I of Russia, however, refused to accept the "new order" in France, and prepared to assume the leadership of all forces opposed to Louis Napoleon. A series of incidents widened the breach between Russia and France. The appearance of a French fleet near Constantinople touched off the fireworks. Then Nicholas, imitating his neighbor, Frederick William, hastened the explosion by banning the celebration of Napoleon's birthday in Russia, claiming that it was propaganda and would hurt the feelings of other nations, who had suffered as a result of Napoleon's victories.<sup>28</sup>

While shaking his fist at Louis Napoleon, the Russian Czar had the satisfaction of believing that he had the support of Napoleon's greatest enemy, Great Britain. To show how much he appreciated this backing, the Czar, upon the death of the Duke of Wellington, September 14, 1852, sent a large delegation under the lead of Prince Gorchakov to participate in the funeral ceremonies.<sup>29</sup> This act created a most favorable impression in England, and the Czar was delighted.

Nicholas I's antagonism to Louis Napoleon's plan to become Emperor was largely inspired by the Czar's advisers. Personally, he wanted to be on good terms with both England and France. He originally approved of Louis Napoleon's strong government in

<sup>27</sup> Friedjung, *op. cit.*, II, 213.

<sup>28</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Aug. 31, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 29, 936, No. 507.

<sup>29</sup> Schiemann, *op. cit.*, IV, 274.

France. "It is my opinion," said Nicholas, "that I would have done the same thing; he is dignified and generous; therefore we should be dignified and generous to him." Moreover, when first informed of Louis Napoleon's intention of assuming the title Napoleon III, the Czar is reported to have queried: "What prevents him from doing it?"<sup>30</sup> Advisers, however, soon proved to the Czar that while Louis Napoleon's strong government was desirable, the establishment of an Empire might pave the way for another general war and a conquest of Europe. Czar Nicholas was subjected to even greater pressure by anti-French diplomats and military leaders. Nesselrode joined General Rochow, the Prussian ambassador to Russia, in a persistent campaign to change the Czar's opinions.<sup>31</sup> Nicholas finally capitulated after reading a copy of Louis Napoleon's *Napoleonic Ideas*, given to him by one of the anti-Bonapartists. This work convinced the Czar that the French ruler was not a sincere conservative. Immediately the court perceived a change in the views of Nicholas and fell in line.

Louis Napoleon's speech to the Senate on November 4, 1852, worried the British government and increased the Czar's hostility. In this address the Prince-President declared that the imperial symbol was of immense significance and that the best interests of France would be promoted by its restoration. He

<sup>30</sup> Schiemann, *op. cit.*, IV, 270.

<sup>31</sup> Letter of Seymour, British ambassador to Russia, Dec. 4, 1852, as quoted by Schiemann, *ibid.*, pp. 421-22.



promised that its re-establishment would end the period of revolution and consecrate the glorious memories of 1789. Thus Frenchmen would have avenged what had been done thirty-seven years before without disturbing the peace of the world.<sup>32</sup>

England acted immediately. In a memorandum to the governments of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, on November 8, 1852, she stated that the proclamation of the Second Empire was imminent and announced that while she would recognize the right of the French people to establish a new form of government, she was of the opinion that all the great powers of Europe must insist that Napoleon III recognize as binding the settlements arranged at Vienna.<sup>33</sup>

The effect of the message on Nicholas I was even more decisive. When M. de Castelbajac, the French ambassador, returned to St. Petersburg from his vacation in Paris, he was immediately summoned to an audience with the Czar. In this interview Nicholas assured him of Russia's great esteem for Louis Napoleon, but at the same time stated that the imperial message had greatly impaired that feeling. How could the ambassador expect Russia to accept an address in which Louis Napoleon denied the validity of the acts of Alexander I of Russia and his allies? Considering all of the many favors the Czar of Russia had rendered Louis Napoleon, this talk was most inappropriate. In reply Castel-

<sup>32</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, p. 337.

<sup>33</sup> Foreign Office memorandum for communication to the governments of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, Nov. 8, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 104-13.



bajac feebly stated that the Czar took the speech too seriously; it was intended for home consumption only. The French ambassador was upset by this incident. When Nesselrode followed the Czar's rebuke with a statement that Russia would never recognize the President as Napoleon III, he seemed discouraged. At the same time in his reports to Paris he shrewdly minimized the Czar's anger.<sup>34</sup>

With all kinds of rumors spreading over Europe concerning Louis Napoleon's imperialist design, Great Britain, on November 9, dispatched a note to the Northern Courts, calling their attention to the probable political change in France, pointing to the danger, and inviting the powers to send plenipotentiaries to London to discuss the problem more thoroughly. Again Austria refused to be involved in the matter, and the meeting did not materialize. Aroused by the growing hostility, the Prince-President determined to stop all of this gossip before it was too late. Through his diplomats he denied any desire to revive his uncle's policies and stated that instead his Empire meant peace and stable government—not the resumption of imperialist wars.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile Nicholas I decided to act. Until now he had simply advised the French President to continue the strong and conservative republic, and not establish

<sup>34</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, pp. 338-41.

<sup>35</sup> Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 13, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 126-29; letter of Drouyn de Lhuys, Nov. 15, 1852, *ibid.*, 130-31; also Minister of Foreign Affairs to Walewski, Nov. 17, 1852, *ibid.*, 135-38.

an Empire, but to no avail;<sup>36</sup> now he tried to win the support of England in a move to prevent the establishment of the Empire.<sup>37</sup> On December 1 he ordered his Ambassador in London to deliver to the French foreign minister a clear statement of the Russian position. In this message the Czar expressed his approval of Louis Napoleon's services to France and Europe, but he made it plain that he, as Czar of Russia, "would sanction no violation of existing treaties and would acknowledge nothing that could be supposed in any way to imply a legitimate right on the part of Louis Napoleon to the throne of France."<sup>38</sup> In delivering this statement Nicholas I believed that he had the hearty support of Prussia and Austria, who had been unfavorably impressed by Louis Napoleon's address to the Senate.

Nicholas soon discovered that he lacked the support of his neighbors. As the fatal day approached, Austria and Prussia became convinced that opposition was no longer expedient. "Their object originally was to drag England into common action." That failed, and they determined therefore not to go too far, believing that continued opposition might bring about a close alliance of France and Great Britain.<sup>39</sup> Buol, the Austrian minister, then proposed a way out of the quandary. His solution was a denial of legitimacy as shown by the

<sup>36</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, pp. 301-12.

<sup>37</sup> Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 23, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 169-73.

<sup>38</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 1, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 940, No. 689.

<sup>39</sup> Thouvenel, letter, Dec. 14, 1852, *AAE (A)*, (*Papiers Thouvenel*), 19, 329.

use of the appellation "*bon ami*" rather than the customary "*mon frère*" on official credentials. This suggestion was accepted with alacrity by Austrian and Prussian representatives of the Northern Courts, only too relieved to escape a showdown.<sup>40</sup>

France was tremendously encouraged by the British decision to recognize the Second Empire. With the support of her powerful neighbor, the Napoleonic government was in a position to disregard all other opposition. At least this was the view of M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French foreign minister. With great effrontery he sent a note to the French ambassador at Berlin, blandly telling him to inform the Prussian government that the imperial problem was a local one and of no concern to foreign powers.<sup>41</sup> At the same time he praised England for her recognition of the Empire and ordered his ambassadors to assume a "colder" tone toward the Northern Courts.<sup>42</sup> It was quite apparent that Louis Napoleon now realized that he could establish the Empire without fear of counteraction. Having gained British support, and fully aware of the confusion and lack of unity in the Northern Courts, he formally declared the creation of the Empire on December 2, 1852. The Northern Courts now faced a *fait accompli*.<sup>43</sup> The position of these conservative powers was

<sup>40</sup> Friedjung, *op. cit.*, II, 214.

<sup>41</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, pp. 350-51.

<sup>42</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 16, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 940, No. 730.

<sup>43</sup> Walewski to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 27, 1852, *AAE (A)*, Vol. 687, 192-94.

distinctly untenable. On December 5 the King of the Two Sicilies recognized the Empire, even though the Neapolitan ruler was a Bourbon. On the sixth Lord Cowley, the British ambassador, presented his credentials in the customary form. All of the small states now hastened to recognize Louis Napoleon. The Northern Courts were—conservatively speaking—in an embarrassing position.<sup>44</sup>

Russia professed to be shocked by England's action, for had not Britain on November 9 protested the establishment of the Empire? Moreover, poor, misguided Nicholas had been led to believe that England would never permit Louis Napoleon to do such a thing.<sup>45</sup> Berlin also was surprised, especially by the quick acceptance of the Second Empire by the small German states; Bismarck, in commenting on their haste, remarked that they did not know what they were doing.<sup>46</sup>

Recognizing the futility of further opposition, Austria and Prussia abandoned their hostility to Louis Napoleon. At first they refused to recognize him as Emperor, but agreed to consider him as an equal. This concession was promptly rejected by Paris, and finally, after a visit by Francis Joseph to Berlin, the two courts decided to give full recognition to the Empire in the traditional manner.<sup>47</sup> To maintain a pretense of co-

<sup>44</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, p. 366; Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 9, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 940, No. 711.

<sup>45</sup> Howard, *op. cit.*, pp. 502-6.

<sup>46</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, p. 363.

<sup>47</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 12, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 940, No. 718; Schiemann, *op. cit.*, IV, 272.

operation with their ally, Russia, they agreed that their ambassadors would not present their credentials until those of Russia had been accepted. Thus the final decision rested on the action of that country.

Russia was in an intolerable position. Her hot protests in the past made inevitable a break in diplomatic relations between Russia and France over the declaration of the Empire.<sup>48</sup> But, inasmuch as no agreement had been arranged between the three Northern Courts as to common action, Russia could not act alone. With the defection of Austria and Prussia, Nicholas I realized that eventually he would have to recognize Napoleon III. But how? The Czar wanted "to save face," if possible, and therefore he determined not to recognize the Emperor as an equal, but to recognize the Empire.

This "peculiar" solution of the problem was partly the result of a minor incident that had injured the pride of the "touchy" Czar. Following the establishment of the Empire, Nicholas I had written a letter to Louis Napoleon, asking for a clarification of his actions. The new Emperor neglected to answer this communication, first because he was too busy, and second because it was addressed to the "President" and not to the "Emperor." Despite this "slight" mistake, Nicholas believed that he had made a real concession in writing Louis and felt hurt when he did not receive a reply. Later, he became angry.<sup>49</sup> Nesselrode, the Russian foreign minis-

<sup>48</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 1, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 940, No. 680.

<sup>49</sup> Cowley to Russell, Dec. 29, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 940, No. 3.

ter, echoed his master's voice and "was actually insulted by Louis Napoleon's crude treatment of the Czar." This petty affair made negotiations between the two powers very difficult.

A second incident arose when the Russian ambassador to France handed the French foreign secretary a dispatch received from Nesselrode. Noting that its contents dealt with the so-called "numeral" problem, M. Drouyn de Lhuys promptly replied that he could not discuss a matter which was a *fait accompli*. Consequently the only observation he could make concerning Count Nesselrode's communication was that he admired "the elegance of its style."<sup>50</sup> This flippant reply served only to increase Nesselrode's ire. In a letter to the Russian ambassador he ordered him to inform the French foreign minister that, despite the French explanations, Russia could not accept the title "Napoleon III," inasmuch as neither Russia nor her allies had ever recognized Napoleon II. Moreover, tradition did not permit the Russian Czar to address a popularly elected sovereign in the traditional terms.

Upon receiving this dispatch the French foreign minister proceeded to give the Russian Bear a diplomatic spanking. Did such an attitude reveal a real spirit of reciprocity? he asked. What right had St. Petersburg, a relatively young court, to interpret tradition—admitting that as a young nation Russia had made much progress in a short time? Why, when the ancient dynasties of Austria and Saxony had agreed to

<sup>50</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Dec. 13, 1852, *ibid.*, No. 738.



recognize Louis Napoleon, did Russia quibble? These were a few of the questions he raised. Then he concluded his reply by informing Russia that unless the credentials of her representatives were drafted in a correct manner, they would not be accepted.<sup>51</sup> While this Franco-Russian dispute ran its course, Austria and Prussia deserted their ally completely. Orders were given that all of their diplomats should be furnished credentials in the full traditional form.

This quarrel over credentials irritated Louis Napoleon, and he greatly resented the delay in their transmission. Drouyn de Lhuys advised against accepting the Russian papers as presented; meanwhile the Emperor simply could not understand why Russia quibbled over a technical point that actually was unimportant. If he had desired true legitimacy he would have called himself Napoleon V and would have dated his reign from his father's death. After all, had he not given adequate guarantees for the maintenance of the *status quo* in his inaugural address? The credentials constituted evidence of Russia's impudence and should be rejected.<sup>52</sup>

Wiser counsels prevailed. Certain sensible men around Louis Napoleon told him that he had attained his objective—the Empire—and that there was nothing to be gained by quarreling over trifles. The British

<sup>51</sup> Lord Cowley stated on January 3, 1852, that France would not accept the Russian credentials.—George Peabody Gooch, ed., *The Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell, 1840-78*, II, 144.

<sup>52</sup> Cowley to Russell, Jan. 4, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 961, Nos. 13, 14.



ambassador strongly urged Louis Napoleon to receive the Russian diplomats. But it was the Comte de Morny, Louis Napoleon's illegitimate half-brother, who played the stellar role in settling this incident. A shrewd speculator on the Bourse, this unscrupulous and avaricious Frenchman knew that if this dispute continued his stocks would decline and he would lose a fortune.<sup>53</sup> Therefore harmonious diplomatic relations must be established between Russia and France at once. With this aim, he interviewed Louis Napoleon. The upshot was that Napoleon III accepted the credentials of the Russian ambassador and of the Russian foreign minister.<sup>54</sup> Thereupon Nesselrode instructed his ambassador to thank Morny for the "good spirit" and the "sagacity" he had shown in bringing this unfortunate disagreement to an end. He also stated that the Czar greatly appreciated the services which Morny had rendered in this delicate matter.<sup>55</sup>

On January 5 Louis Napoleon received the Russian ambassador, and, disregarding customary procedure, broke the seals of the credentials and read them, although he knew perfectly well what was in them. He told the Russian diplomat to thank the Czar for the term "my good friend," for, said he, "one must recog-

<sup>53</sup> Schiemann, *op. cit.*, IV, 272. Persigny, in his *Mémoires*, p. 222, says that the Russian ambassador at Paris also thought that most of Louis Napoleon's ministers were "more interested in the rise and fall of stocks than with conceptions of politics."

<sup>54</sup> Cowley to Russell, Jan. 25, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 962, No. 54.

<sup>55</sup> Alfred Rambaud, "La France et la Russie pendant le Second Empire," *Revue Bleue*, XLVIII (Nov. 14, 1891), 625-26.

nize his brothers, but one can choose his friends.”<sup>56</sup> Within a week the Austrian and Prussian ambassadors had presented their credentials in proper form. The delicate incident had been brought to a satisfactory end. Louis Napoleon was now recognized as Emperor of the Second French Empire.

But Louis Napoleon had gained more than mere recognition. He no longer had to fear the continued hostility of England and the Northern Courts; he had weakened effectively the alliance of the latter.<sup>57</sup> Henceforth Prussia and Austria blamed each other for the delay in settling the matter; whereas Nicholas I was frankly disgusted with his neighbors for not backing him during the entire “recognition” incident. At a formal military parade in St. Petersburg, and in the presence of all of his generals, the Czar expressed his disappointment by heaping reproaches on the representatives of Austria and Prussia. Meanwhile, in Paris, Baron Hübner of Austria remarked: “Victory is ours, but my instinct tells me we have conducted a bad campaign.”<sup>58</sup>

Final settlement of this “recognition” matter led to a minor incident. The Prussian King, anxious to get it over with, invited the French ambassador to deliver his new credentials at a reception in the evening. M. de Varennes refused, demanding a formal reception in the daytime, and Frederick William was forced to make a

<sup>56</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, pp. 402-3.

<sup>57</sup> Extract of a letter from Lord Cowley, Jan. 13, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 961.

<sup>58</sup> Friedjung, *op. cit.*, II, 215.

special trip from Potsdam to receive him. The meeting was cordial on the King's part, for he talked of literature and science; and then, at the conclusion of the ceremony, he expressed the hope that his ambassador at Paris had been well treated.

The Czar's reception of Castelbajac was more amiable. Nicholas probably realized by now that he had made a mistake and wanted to heal the wounds. Warmly thanking both Emperor Napoleon and Castelbajac for the successful completion of the affair, he went on to say that he hoped the Emperor would answer his letters and strike up a more intimate acquaintance with him, for he desired more than official relationship. Then, revealing what was really in his mind, the Czar suddenly opened the question of the Holy Places and the recent disputes there. He expressed a fear of the Ottoman Empire, but added that no one favored its territorial integrity more than he. To show his cordiality, the Czar walked to the door with the French ambassador and showed him on the way a picture of Napoleon I in the Tuileries, which, he said, had been on display for fifteen years.<sup>59</sup>

But it was a little late for Nicholas I to count on French co-operation in the Near East. British support of Napoleon III had prepared the way for close Anglo-French relations, a friendship that was to have tremendous diplomatic and economic consequences in the years ahead.

<sup>59</sup> Rothan, *L'Europe*, pp. 409-15.

## The Utopian Dictator

LOUIS NAPOLEON's assumption of the imperial title in 1852 was not received with enthusiasm by liberty-loving Englishmen. They were continually haunted by fear that he would try to avenge Trafalgar. Angry denunciations of the dictatorship in pamphlets, newspapers, and public speeches—all indicated a hostile attitude toward the new Emperor. But this criticism was not so serious as it appeared on the surface. Just as smoke is usually most dense where the fire is weakest, so the "talk" against Louis Napoleon was but a reflection of a fear that was to be dissipated by favorable events.

As we have seen, influential elements in England refused to look upon Louis Napoleon as a menace. The middle classes and the government knew very well that he was the outstanding foe of radicalism on the Continent. While they were not willing to permit him to use his antagonism to socialism or republicanism as a means of extending his imperialist interests, they realized that he alone could maintain law and order in

France, the center of revolutionary unrest. Moreover, most Englishmen were free to admit that if the Empire meant the elimination of the "protectionist" assembly and the eventual establishment of free trade—"Well, the Empire could at least be tolerated."

Succeeding months witnessed the gradual decline of British disapproval of the Empire. In January of 1853, following the selection of Lord John Russell as British Foreign Secretary, both governments seemed desirous of friendly relations. Before the end of the month the marriage of Napoleon III to the Spanish countess, Eugénie, aroused much more interest than talk of another war.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, by that time British businessmen saw an opportunity to reap the benefit of England's recognition of the Second Empire.

Beginning with the Great Revolution of 1789, political changes in France had reacted on practically every nation in Europe. For example, with the possible exception of Russia, the Revolution of 1848 in France unfavorably affected all European states. But of these countries, England suffered the most. This political upheaval practically disrupted her trade with Europe, and her merchants and industrialists uneasily contemplated an indefinite period of falling prices and of declining profits.

The rise of Louis Napoleon changed the economic

<sup>1</sup> Many Englishmen disapproved of this marriage. Aware of the discontent, Napoleon III, according to the British ambassador, said that he would not have married the empress if he could have arranged an alliance "that would have brought him into nearer connection with England."—Cowley to Russell, Feb. 9, 1853, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 22, 10 (private).

trend in France. Recovery followed his election. This revival was facilitated by Louis Napoleon's opposition to radicalism and by his program of economic expansion and social reform.<sup>2</sup> The "new order" was announced by Louis Napoleon in his famous speech at Bordeaux, on September 27, 1852, when he said:

We have immense territories to cultivate, roads to open, harbors to deepen, canals to dig, rivers to render navigable, railways to complete. . . . That is how I interpret the Empire, if the Empire is to be restored. Such are the conquests I contemplate; and you, all of you who surround me, you who wish our country's good, you are my soldiers.<sup>3</sup>

In this address the Prince-President was merely announcing a "planned society" that he had introduced shortly after the *coup d'état* of 1851. At that time he had, despite the recalcitrance of the National Assembly, forced the Bank of France to make loans on all the types of securities (not just government bonds) at lower rates of interest to private individuals as well as to political authorities. By the act he saved many landowners who were practically bankrupt as a result of the heavy mortgages they were carrying. While helping property owners, the Prince-President proceeded to aid the masses by inaugurating a program of public works designed to furnish jobs, and by introducing bills for money to construct lodging houses for working people, to aid paupers, and for "the relief" of the unemployed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Boon, *Rêve et réalité*, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Moniteur*, Oct. 12, 1852, p. 1607.

<sup>4</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, April 5, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 931, No. 113; Cowley to Clarendon, June 20, 1853, *ibid.*, 970, Nos. 448-51; Cowley to Clarendon, Sept. 23, 1855, *ibid.*, 1076, No. 268.



These reforms benefited some people and injured others. Reduction of interest rates aided the agricultural groups by cutting interest payments in half. Public works provided jobs for thousands of workers and partially solved the problem of unemployment. Relief was granted some unfortunates and gave the masses a certain amount of social security. On the other hand, this "new order" hurt the chief advocates of a stable capitalistic society—the bourgeoisie. In the first place, Louis Napoleon permitted the famous bank, *Crédit mobilier*, to gain almost complete control of the money market, and thus placed it in a position where it could crush private enterprise "if it desired." In the second place, the sudden introduction of undertakings such as the construction of railways, canals, and highways was inevitably followed by a speculative orgy in which shares in various companies "doubled overnight." Stock in the *Crédit mobilier* advanced from 500 francs to 1700 francs in three days, shares in the Lyons Railroad rose from 1000 to 3000 francs, and investments in many other enterprises experienced similar enhancement of values. As a result fear of a severe financial crisis in the money market arose. Many men saw in this boom (which had as its concomitants a huge governmental deficit and the expansion of cheap money) the possibility of a complete economic collapse. Stories of corruption that circulated throughout Paris served only to increase this fear. As in most periods of inflation and speculation, many men, in business and in the government, were involved in "shady" transactions.



Louis Napoleon had to intervene in order to save one of his ministers and avoid a public scandal.<sup>5</sup> These exhibitions of human selfishness discredited the Emperor's program and strengthened the opposition to his regime.

Like many well-intentioned reformers, Louis Napoleon found it impracticable to surround himself with capable and sympathetic aides. He knew that most Frenchmen were willing to help him make France "a land of milk and honey," but he also discovered that a sizable section of the bourgeoisie did not approve of his "progressive" ideas or of his "socialistic" methods.

This French middle class had been largely responsible for the rise of Louis Napoleon and naturally expected his support. Prior to 1848 they had favored a constitutional government with a limited suffrage that would place power in their hands. Following the overthrow of Louis Philippe in the early spring of 1848, they discovered that a new menace threatened their very existence—socialism. Within a few months (by June), a death struggle ensued between the advocates of private property and those of socialism. With the overthrow of the radicals the bourgeoisie played an important role in the discussions that resulted in the creation of a constitution providing for the establishment of a Second Republic, controlled by them. The election of an arch-foe of radicalism, Louis Napoleon, as

<sup>5</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, June 15, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 934, No. 341; Cowley to Russell, Jan. 17, 1853, *ibid.*, 961, No. 38; Cowley to Russell, Feb. 7, 1853, *ibid.*, 962, No. 81; Edward Ellice to Russell, Sept. 30, 1853, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 23, 11 (Russell papers).

President, had been welcomed by a large section of the bourgeoisie. But socialism remained a threat to a stable republic and created a lack of unity in the government that made leadership and progress impossible. Discouraged by a situation that seemed hopeless, a great number of middle-class men turned to the right and reluctantly accepted the "protection" of a dictatorship. Led by a very capable bourgeois parliamentarian, Baroche, the middle classes abandoned the liberal and parliamentary cause and rallied behind the personal leadership of Louis Napoleon in war on the reds.<sup>6</sup>

Baroche had served in the government of Louis Napoleon since the establishment of the Second Republic. As Minister of the Interior and chief parliamentarian (1848-51) he strove to maintain concord between the Assembly and the President. Sincere opponent of a dictatorship, he endeavored in 1851 to get Louis Napoleon to abandon his plan to overthrow the Assembly by a *coup d'état*. But after the coup had occurred, he rallied to the support of the new regime. Henceforth, he exchanged the role of a leader for that of a docile servant of the state. Typically bourgeois, Baroche soon found it difficult to accept Louis Napoleon's attempt to kill radicalism by adopting a semi-socialistic program. This middle-class politician believed profoundly in private property and fought social reforms and public-works programs that threatened

<sup>6</sup> Jean Maurain, *Un Bourgeois au XIX siècle; Baroche, Ministre de Napoléon III d'après ses papiers inédits* (Paris, 1936), pp. 501-2; Lord Minton to Russell, Oct. 25, 1853, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 23, 10 (Russell papers).

through the imposition of high taxes and excessive regulation of business to destroy the capitalistic system. A keen businessman, he knew that this legislation would check economic expansion, especially in the heavy industries. It would therefore prevent the establishment of a prosperous industrialized state.<sup>7</sup>

Napoleon III soon discovered that he could not rely on Baroche and other bourgeois administrators to carry out his "new order." Nor were his Bonapartist followers of much value. They approved of all his policies, but with the exceptions of Persigny and Morny, they were neither able nor experienced.

Curiously, it was among the adherents of the great utopian leader, Saint-Simon, that Napoleon III obtained his most enthusiastic and capable backers.<sup>8</sup> These young bourgeois idealists had been very critical of the Second Republic. They opposed the emphasis by the government upon the compilation of constitutional laws, and they were disgusted with the numerous political quarrels that occurred in practically every session of the National Assembly. In their opinion, one of the most important duties of the government was social reform. Unlike the Socialists who sought an equitable distribution of wealth between capital and labor, the Saint-Simonians contended that the collaboration of all classes in the attainment of increased production would solve every social problem.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Maurain, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-53.

<sup>8</sup> Boon, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> Georges Jacques Weill, "Les Saint-Simoniens sous Napoléon III," *Revue des études Napoléoniennes*, III (1913), 391-92; see also Weill's monograph, *L'Ecole saint-simonienne; son histoire, son influence jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1896), pp. 31ff.

This program dovetailed with Louis Napoleon's "new order." Like the Saint-Simonians, he proposed to achieve prosperity for France by building railroads, expanding commerce, encouraging industry, fostering agriculture, and inaugurating a program of public works. "The wealth of a country," wrote Napoleon III, "depends on the prosperity of agriculture and of industry, on the development of commerce—foreign and domestic—and on a just and equitable distribution of public revenues."<sup>10</sup> In carrying out his "Grand Design" Napoleon III intended to furnish governmental aid. At the same time he had no intention of curbing private enterprise through governmental intervention. Consequently this method of social reform won the enthusiastic approval of the Saint-Simonians. Calling Louis Napoleon their socialist Emperor, they unreservedly declared that his reform program was their dream, and that even in minute details his plan and their ideas were harmonized.

The utopians were especially interested in Napoleon III's scheme to solve unemployment by organizing workers. "It is in the budget that one must find the financial support for a system that will have for its aim the betterment of the working class," the Emperor had written in his *Extinction of Pauperism*. His project, as has been stated, was the formation of a workingmen's military organization to clear and to work uncultivated lands. The Saint-Simonians had a plan to

<sup>10</sup> Louis Napoleon, *Oeuvres*, II, 111.

establish industrial armies that was similar to that of Napoleon III in many ways.<sup>11</sup>

Inasmuch as the Saint-Simonians and Napoleon III saw eye to eye in this program of social reform and economic prosperity, the Emperor soon handed over to various "liberal" businessmen, chiefly bankers, the task of carrying out his plans. Under the direction of these bourgeois utopians, economic development became the dominant aim, and as a result, between 1852 and 1857, progress in the various phases of economic life was phenomenal. This was especially true in the field of railway transportation. Prior to this time depressions and political unrest had wiped out practically all societies interested in the expansion of railway facilities. To remedy this situation, the capital of a huge financial organization, the notorious *Crédit mobilier* (founded in 1832 by the Péreire brothers) was doubled. This financial institution was placed under the control of one of Napoleon's most able and most unscrupulous adherents, the banker and Saint-Simonian, Isaac Péreire, who was to use its tremendous financial resources to underwrite a grandiose scheme of railway construction.<sup>12</sup>

Consolidation and expansion of the French railroads were the main objectives of the Péreire brothers and of

<sup>11</sup> Weill, "Les Saint-Simoniens," p. 393.

<sup>12</sup> Napoleon III "gave encouragement to all types of banking enterprise." He encouraged the expansion of the *Comptoir d'Escompte* (founded in 1848), a commercial bank that engaged actively in imperialist affairs, and he subsidized the establishment on August 2, 1852, of the *Crédit foncier*, a bank that together with the *Crédit agricole*, obtained a virtual monopoly of the mortgage business.—Shepard Bancroft Clough, *France, a History of National Economics, 1789-1939* (New York, 1939), pp. 173-75.

other French financiers. About fifty-eight small railroad companies were merged into six powerful organizations in 1855, and these were granted ninety-nine-year leases to insure credit and thus permit rapid development. To facilitate their growth, these companies were guaranteed loans from the *Crédit mobilier* at 4 per cent. As a result of these arrangements railroad expansion jumped from 3,000 kilometers in 1852 to 6,500 at the end of 1856. Not satisfied with the creation of a great French system of transportation, these energetic and "practical" followers of Saint-Simon extended their undertakings beyond the frontiers of that country. They built Austrian railroads, began the construction of lines which traversed the Hapsburg domains, and entered Switzerland, Spain, and Russia.<sup>13</sup>

Tremendous profits were amassed by those engaged directly or indirectly in the building of these railroads.<sup>14</sup> Péreire and other French speculators made millions through rather questionable promotion transactions; British industrialists and merchants acquired fortunes through sale of rails and other manufactured goods in Europe. To French wage earners went the scraps: thousands of jobs at meager wages.

French manufacturers, especially in the heavy industries, did not share the lucrative profits that were made during this period of industrial and commercial expansion. Their failure to participate was largely due to

<sup>13</sup> Weill, "Les Saint-Simoniens," pp. 394-96.

<sup>14</sup> Cowley to Clarendon, Nov. 14, 1854, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 1025, No. 1366.



the lack of coal and iron and the result of the imposition of freer trade upon the French nation by Napoleon III. During the Restoration France had maintained a high protective tariff which had discouraged expansion of commerce between England and France. Moreover, as long as France maintained these "duties" on goods, the leading nations of Europe adhered to the protective system.<sup>15</sup> This "restrictive method" of commerce was retained by France until the establishment of the Second Empire. Louis Philippe seemed at times to favor free trade, but his "parliament was controlled by the new class of industrialists; this 'new aristocracy,' which had the dominant voice in legislation, was resolutely opposed to any reform in the direction of freer trade."<sup>16</sup> Thus all serious attempts to alter the ultraprotectionist system of the Restoration "came to naught during the July monarchy. What successful attacks there were upon the tariff structure were of a very secondary nature. Only the fact that there were assaults upon the almost insurmountable customs barrier is of real significance."<sup>17</sup>

Unable to abolish completely the protective system, Louis Philippe attempted to encourage the negotiation of treaties, designed to lessen customs duties, between France and her neighbors. The establishment of the

<sup>15</sup> Lillian Charlotte (Tomn) Knowles, *Economic Development in the Nineteenth Century, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States* (London, 1932), p. 136.

<sup>16</sup> Frank Arnold Haight, *A History of French Commercial Policies* (New York, 1941), pp. 17-18.

<sup>17</sup> Clough, *op. cit.*, p. 130.



German *Zollverein* had filled not only France but also Belgium "with apprehension for their commercial futures. . . . Their common fear, their territorial proximity, and rumors that the *Zollverein* hoped to include Belgium and Switzerland, led the two countries to consider the possibility of forming in their turn a customs union." From 1837 to 1842 both governments tried to overcome the obstacles to this agreement, but to no avail. In Belgium many patriots, aided by hostile shipping interests, opposed the union because they were convinced that it would result in the loss of Belgian independence. In France metallurgists and coal mine operators of the north disapproved of the union, "for they feared that France would be inundated with Belgian coal, iron, steel, and machinery."

Foreign nations, afraid of industrial competition, did what they could to prevent the consummation of this plan. The *Zollverein* and Great Britain were especially hostile, hypocritically claiming that "a Franco-Belgian customs union would be an attack on Belgian independence and contrary to the neutrality treaty of 1831." This opposition was powerful enough to prevent the establishment of a Franco-Belgian tariff settlement; and, according to the French metallurgists, the forges of France and the manufacturers of linen, woolen, and cotton retained that protection essential to their existence.<sup>18</sup>

While England opposed a Franco-Belgian customs agreement, she vigorously favored an Anglo-French

<sup>18</sup> Clough, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-35.

pact. For many years influential elements in British business and governmental circles had endeavored to eliminate all trade barriers that existed between England and France, but had made little headway. With the establishment of the Second Empire, the whole picture changed. Then, using his dictatorial powers, Napoleon III disarmed the National Assembly, the one organization that represented the interests of the industrialists. By this action complete control of the economic as well as the political phases of government rested in the hands of one man.<sup>19</sup>

At first the opponents of free trade were unaware of what was going on. They believed Louis Napoleon to be a sincere advocate of protection, apparently forgetting that from the beginning he had insisted that he favored it only as a temporary measure which would accelerate the development of industry and contribute to the well-being of the wage earners.<sup>20</sup>

With the advent of the Empire the attitude of the Emperor toward protection changed. Influenced undoubtedly by a number of French and English free traders and perhaps desirous of removing British hostility to his plan to annex Nice and Savoy by opening the markets of France to British goods, he was slowly won over to the cause of *laissez faire*. One of the Frenchmen largely responsible for this conversion was the ardent exponent of free trade, Michel Chevalier.

<sup>19</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, Sept. 27, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 937, No. 565.

<sup>20</sup> Louis Napoleon, *Oeuvres*, V, 108.

In September, 1852, this enthusiastic utopian saw an opportunity to win Napoleon III to his cause. In a letter to the British apostle of this doctrine, Cobden, he expressed the view that while Louis Napoleon seemed to favor protection, the Prince-President was so desirous of helping the masses that he might become a convert to free trade if he were convinced that its adoption by France would aid the common people.<sup>21</sup> At that time a plan was drawn up which was designed to bring him into camp.

Meanwhile Emperor Napoleon III expressed indirectly his interest in the tariff problem by announcing changes in the constitution which would give him the right to arrange commercial treaties with other countries without consulting his *corps législatif*.<sup>22</sup> Promulgation of this program finally aroused the opposition of the protectionists. These men, industrialists for the most part, began to distrust the Emperor's economic views and were therefore afraid to intrust him with the sole right to determine the trade policies of the Empire. Influenced by them, Napoleon III issued an imperial decree, nominating a superior council of commerce, agriculture, and industry which was to advise him on all questions "submitted to it by the government, concerning customs, tariffs, treaties of commerce, navigation acts, etc." This council was to have no powers "beyond

<sup>21</sup> Chevalier to Cobden, Sept. 18, 1852, cited by Arthur Louis Dunham, *The Anglo-French Treaty of Commerce of 1860 and the Progress of the Industrial Revolution in France* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1930), p. 41.

<sup>22</sup> Émile Levasseur, *Histoire des classes ouvrières et de l'industrie en France de 1789 à 1870* (Paris, 1903-4), II, 585.

those of giving advice on subjects submitted for its consideration."<sup>23</sup>

Free traders in France and in England welcomed the Emperor's assumption of complete powers in the matter of trade. In France these advocates of economic freedom asserted that the people wanted Napoleon III, "rather than the reluctant Parliament,"<sup>24</sup> to determine commercial policies; while the British ambassador summed up British opinion exceedingly well when he wrote that it was to be hoped that the French government would use its power of altering tariffs "to facilitate commercial relations with other countries."<sup>25</sup>

In favoring a change in the tariffs Napoleon III was motivated by two considerations. In the first place, poor harvests in 1853 had brought about a drastic rise in prices of foodstuffs, and the Emperor therefore decided to diminish the duties on commodities so as to lower the cost of living for the masses. In the second place, he was determined to do everything in his power to strengthen the friendly relations between England and France. These aims caused him to encourage any change which would bring "the French tariff more in harmony with the commercial policy of the times."<sup>26</sup> Consequently, certain minor restrictions in the tariffs of the two countries were removed (1853 and 1855), but at that time the French Assembly refused to reduce

<sup>23</sup> Cowley to Russell, Feb. 4, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 962, No. 77; Cowley to Clarendon, March 21, 1853, *ibid.*, 965, No. 166.

<sup>24</sup> Walewski to Malmesbury, Sept. 25, 1852, *ibid.*, 948.

<sup>25</sup> Cowley to Russell, Feb. 4, 1853, *ibid.*, 940, No. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Cowley to Clarendon, Dec. 22, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 978, No. 978.

the duties on two important exports from England, coal and iron.

These limited concessions did not satisfy Napoleon III. Convinced that France had advanced industrially to a point where she could compete on equal terms with Great Britain, he reached the conclusion that high protective tariffs were no longer necessary. Nevertheless, strong opposition by the industrialists and the *corps législatif* in 1854 prevented him from making drastic changes in the tariff system. In the next two years, however, he completely disregarded these hostile groups and brought about tariff reforms.

Of the number of men close to the Emperor who were partly responsible for this important economic change, his half-brother, Morny, and his cousin, Prince Napoleon, helped to influence Louis Napoleon to adopt this policy. But Chevalier and Cobden, French and British apostles of free trade, were the individuals largely responsible for Napoleon III's conversion. As stated before,<sup>27</sup> Michel Chevalier, friend and adviser of Napoleon III, had very close relations with British free traders. On one of his frequent trips to England, he and Cobden had agreed upon the necessity of a new trade agreement between France and England.<sup>28</sup> Without seeking governmental approval of his activities, Chevalier called on the able British individualist and statesman, Gladstone, and obtained his approval of the scheme.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See pp. 163-64. <sup>28</sup> Dunham, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur Lewis Dunham, "Michel Chevalier et le traité de 1860," *Revue historique*, CLXXI (Jan., 1933), 50-52.

Despite his success in England, Chevalier knew that in order to carry out his plans he must convert Napoleon III. Returning to France, he refrained from expounding his views to the Emperor, but instead obtained an interview with one of Napoleon's ministers, Rouher, who was close to the Emperor and was a keen interpreter of Louis Napoleon's ideas. Chevalier learned that Napoleon III was favorably disposed towards tariff reforms, and, accordingly, he arranged an interview with the Emperor. At this meeting Napoleon III listened attentively to Chevalier's arguments in favor of free trade and admitted that the time was ripe for the enactment of a treaty with England that would bring about tariff reform.<sup>30</sup> On the same day the Emperor had a conference with Chevalier's British collaborator, Cobden. This astute economist was well aware of the Emperor's desire to help the masses, and, accordingly, told Louis Napoleon how Britain had lowered the cost of living by abolishing the Corn Laws and by establishing free trade. Greatly impressed by what Cobden had said, the Emperor expressed a desire to do the same thing in France, but he added, ". . . the difficulties are very great. We Frenchmen do not carry out reforms; we specialize in revolutions."<sup>31</sup>

After the interview Napoleon III called in various experts and asked them to prepare a new tariff system. An announcement of the changes was prepared,<sup>32</sup> and

<sup>30</sup> Senior, *Conversations*, II, 314-16.

<sup>31</sup> Cobden to Palmerston, Oct. 29, 1859, *Cobden Papers*, as quoted by Dunham, *Anglo-French Treaty of Commerce of 1860*, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.



at another meeting with Cobden on December 21, 1859, the Emperor assured the Englishman that he was determined to carry through a program of tariff reforms that would benefit the masses.<sup>33</sup> On January 15, 1860, the Emperor announced publicly his intention of publishing a letter he had sent to his minister of state, Fould. In this communication he openly declared that high tariffs must be eliminated in order to lower prices, increase consumption of goods, and encourage commerce. He also expressed the view that industry, railway construction, and agriculture would continue to expand and would create a prosperity hitherto unequaled in France.<sup>34</sup>

Napoleon III's announcement of a freer trade policy for France was received in England with tremendous enthusiasm. Merchants, industrialists, and politicians all knew that this would throw the markets of France—if not of Europe—wide open to British goods. They realized that other European countries would follow the example of France—which they did—and England then would be the industrial kingpin of the Continent.<sup>35</sup> A few days after the publication of the Emperor's letter a definite treaty was signed between France and England (January 23, 1860). Announcement of this agreement appeared in the press on February 11. Henceforth numerous trade restrictions be-

<sup>33</sup> John Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden* (London, 1881), II, 260.

<sup>34</sup> Louis Napoleon, *Oeuvres*, V, 107-12.

<sup>35</sup> Gladstone to Russell, Dec. 23, 1859, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 22, 19 (private papers).



tween the two countries were eliminated. France seemed to be headed in the direction of free trade.

There was sharp criticism of this significant change. In England there were men who believed it to be connected with certain other diplomatic and territorial problems. One Englishman, for example, was convinced that Napoleon III might ask England "to endorse his policy in Italy" as a reward for the establishment by him of freer trade. "I do not know that we have any right," he wrote, "even if it were our interest, to dispute about the cession and annexation of Savoy to France, but it would I think be a dangerous error to give our formal assent to the principle of such aggrandizement."<sup>36</sup> Formidable criticism of the Emperor's economic policy existed in France. In the Senate and the *corps législatif* a number of hostile speeches were delivered, indicating strong opposition to free trade. Moreover, the big industrialists protested the adoption of the free-trade treaty with great energy. But the dictatorship permitted no effective, organized resistance. Napoleon III had the final word, and no individual, group, or legislative body could oppose him. French industrialists, therefore, had to stand by and see French development in the heavy industries hampered, so that Louis Napoleon might cater to the French masses and appease the British middle classes.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> H. Reeve to Granville, Jan. 16, 1860, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, 24 (Granville papers).

<sup>37</sup> Boon, *Rêve et réalité*, p. 142; Dispatch, Feb. 16, 1860, *AAE (correspondance politique Angleterre)*, Vol. 715, 127; also, letter, Feb. 11, 1860, *AAE (Papiers Thouvenel)*, Vol. 15, 210.

As a result of this treaty of commerce, Great Britain reaped a fabulous reward. In the first place, the treaty was the signal for the enactment of a series of trade pacts. Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland concluded trade agreements with England and with France. Thus Napoleon III paved the way for the lowering of tariffs in a number of European countries. Secondly, while France enjoyed an era of "good times" after 1860, it was in England, thanks to free trade as well as to railroad construction, that prosperity reached its zenith. All phases of life were surcharged by this economic triumph. Scholars, philosophers, poets, historians, economists, inventors expanded under this age of comfort and security, and devoted their talents to defending an individualistic system that had contributed so much to their well-being.

England's support of Napoleon III brought her diplomatic as well as economic rewards. In foreign affairs the establishment of the Empire marked the beginning of real collaboration between England and France in Near Eastern affairs. Previously Russia, France, and Great Britain had been involved in bitter quarrels over various phases of this intricate problem; and just prior to the establishment of the Second Empire, Russia and France seemed at the point of going to war over the Holy Places in the Near East.<sup>38</sup> The establishment of the French Empire changed the picture completely. In 1853 England scrapped an agree-

<sup>38</sup> Vernon John Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straits Question, 1844-1856* (Berkeley, Calif., 1931), p. 199; Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, I, 375-76.

ment she had made with Russia and substituted an Anglo-French understanding, designed to check the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and its partition by Austria and Russia.<sup>39</sup>

This "diplomatic revolution," as interpreted by Lord Palmerston, marked the final triumph of his crusade to bring about Anglo-French collaboration. In 1848 Palmerston had welcomed the fall of Louis Philippe and the rise of Louis Napoleon, and from that moment he had worked for the establishment of friendly relations between France and England. With enthusiasm he finally witnessed the acceptance by influential Englishmen of the idea that Louis Napoleon's rule meant peace; with great joy he noted the adoption of tariff reforms by France; and with deep pride he saw the consummation of an alliance whereby England and France isolated Russia, the bogeyman of the Near East. From now on Palmerston became a profound admirer of Napoleon III and France. As a visitor to Paris in 1858 he was graciously entertained by the Emperor and the Empire and was given a most friendly welcome by Walewski, Persigny, and other political figures. Greatly impressed with the "wonderful improvements in Paris," he wrote: "The Emperor is following the career of Rome's Augustus, and will do much more for the prosperity of France than the Roman Emperor did for the Roman Empire."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> A. Layard to Granville, March 16, 1853, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, No. 18 (private); Jerningham to Russell, Feb. 17, 1853, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 963, No. 13; Cowley to Clarendon, March 30, 1853, *ibid.*, 965, No. 187 (confidential).

<sup>40</sup> Palmerston to Granville, Aug. 30, 1858, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 24, No. 18 (private).

But not all Frenchmen were in accord with Louis Napoleon's friendly attitude toward England. Lord Cowley, who wanted to bring France into an alliance that would settle "disagreements between the two countries in all parts of the world," admitted in 1856 that actually England had no influential friend in France save Napoleon III.<sup>41</sup> "Luckily," said Cowley, "he *knows the value* of the alliance."<sup>42</sup>

Many Frenchmen not only disliked Louis Napoleon's pro-English policies but also questioned the soundness of his economic and social program. They admitted that France was enjoying a temporary period of prosperity as a result of the construction of railways and canals, the modernization of Paris, and the expansion of the Empire; but they also knew as early as 1852 that France was paying dearly for all of these undertakings. Political liberty was nonexistent; prices and taxes were high; bondholders were suffering financial loss through reduced interest rates; the important French shipping industry was declining; the balance of trade which had been "very favorable" became "unfavorable"; and industrialists, especially those in heavy industries, were finding it difficult to meet the competition of British manufacturers who, aided by fewer trade restrictions, were able to undersell their French competitors.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Cowley to Clarendon, July 6, 1854, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 1018, No. 850.

<sup>42</sup> Cowley to Granville, Nov. 17, 1856, *PRO, FO (GD)*, 29, No. 19 (private).

<sup>43</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, July 5, 1852, *PRO, FO (GB)*, 27, 935, No. 390. According to Clough (*op. cit.*, pp. 195-96), "those trades which had little to fear from the free-trade agreement, like silk and

Dissatisfaction spread rapidly throughout France. Numerous conservatives and Catholics began to agitate in favor of a royalist restoration; middle-class members underwent a conversion to republicanism; and a radical minority still worked for the establishment of a socialist state. Vainly the Emperor tried to satisfy his bourgeois opposition by creating a "liberal Empire." Political concessions failed to placate the legitimist royalists, the republicans, or the radicals. Finally, the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) revealed the weaknesses of this tragic Empire—its lack of unity, and its economic, financial, and military unpreparedness. Following its rapid collapse, Louis Napoleon again became an exile.

During the few remaining years of his life, this ill and aged refugee provided the final touch to his romantic career. Proudly and perhaps sincerely he continued to show a deep interest in the welfare of the common man, for "neither deceptions, nor ingratitude had deprived him of his keen interest in social reform."<sup>44</sup> To the day of his death, however, he seemed unaware of the fact that the only group in France he had really helped were the more realistic of utopians—the imperialist bankers. Nor did he ever realize that in placing social reform and free trade ahead of industrial achievement he had put the cart ahead of the horse.

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wine, profited. Some, like the iron and steel businesses, which were granted a small degree of protection, improved their plants and suffered very little. Others, like shipping, that could not stand before British rivalry, were definitely harmed. . . . French exports of manufactured articles remained almost stationary from 1860 to 1870, while the importation of manufactured products increased nearly 500 per cent. The exportation of raw products for industry increased by 44 per cent."

<sup>44</sup> Boon, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

History, later, might vaguely admire Louis Napoleon for his sturdy struggle to follow in the steps of his famous uncle without making Napoleonic grandeur his master; it might pay tribute to his clever jockeying of political groups in his race toward his ambitious goals; it might give respect to his warm-hearted humanitarianism and even draw an analogy between his aims and the social security programs of present-day democracies; in fact, it might regard the Second Empire as a noble experiment worthy of analysis for its effect on later European history. On the other hand, it might just as vaguely find fault with his inability to measure up to the forceful stature of Napoleon I; it might criticize him for his vacillation, opportunistic inconsistency, and readiness to deceive his backers; it might condemn his great designs for social reform as impractical schemes of a dreamer or a schemer; and it might describe the Second Empire as an ignoble interlude between republics. Yet history, as this volume shows, if it is not willing to place Louis Napoleon in a niche of fame as a utopian dictator, should record the fact that he was a French ruler who early recognized that, arrayed against each other, England and France would be subject to constant political attacks. In co-operation, diplomatically and economically, they could and would dominate Europe, maintain the *status quo*, and keep the peace.



## Bibliographical Note

DURING THE PAST two decades many special works and monographs on Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire have been published. Pre-eminent among these is the scholarly volume by F. A. Simpson, entitled *Louis Napoleon and the Recovery of France, 1848-1856* (2nd ed.; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930). Prior to the publication of this valuable contribution, the student interested in the man and the period was largely dependent upon the works of La Gorce and of Ollivier, which were practically undocumented and out of date.<sup>1</sup> Simpson's volume is an accurate and impartial political interpretation of the rise of Louis Napoleon, based on a painstaking study of available documents and printed works.

The volume, however, has definite limitations. It does not present an adequate economic and social picture. Fortunately, within the past ten years much

<sup>1</sup> Pierre François Gustave de La Gorce, *Histoire de la seconde République française* (Paris, 1887), 2 vols.; by the same author, *Histoire du second Empire* (Paris, 1894-1905), 7 vols.; Emile Ollivier, *L'Empire Libéral* (Paris, 1895-1915), 17 vols.



headway has been made in the study of these aspects. Especially noteworthy among the published monographs, articles, and books, are Hendrick Nicolaas Boon's *Rêve et réalité dans l'oeuvre économique et sociale de Napoléon III* (La Haye, 1936); Jean Maurain's *Un bourgeois française au XIX siècle, Baroche, ministre de Napoléon III* (Paris, 1936); Arthur Louis Dunham's *The Anglo-French Treaty of Commerce of 1860, and the Progress of the Industrial Revolution in France* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1930); Shepard Bancroft Clough's *France, a History of National Economics, 1789-1939* (New York, 1939); and Albert Léon Guérard's *Napoleon III* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943). These and other scholarly and stimulating works, in turn, have opened up related topics that must be investigated before a definitive history of Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire can be written.

The many opportunities that present themselves to the scholar interested in this field are ably discussed in a bibliographical article by Robert Schnerb, "Napoleon III and the Second Empire," in the *Journal of Modern History*, VIII (Sept., 1936), 338-355. In this illuminating essay Mr. Schnerb points out the important contributions that have already been made and indicates the various topics that he believes merit further investigation.

In attempting to fill one of the gaps—Anglo-French relations during the establishment of the Second Empire—the author has endeavored to bring out economic and social, as well as political, developments

which are essential if one is to obtain an all-round understanding of this subject. To do this he has tried to examine all pertinent manuscripts, newspapers, periodicals, and books that deal with the period. In England he consulted the various collections, such as the English Foreign Office Papers, found at the Public Record Office; additional manuscripts at the British Museum; and the letters, reports, and copies of consular dispatches at the British Board of Trade. In France he examined the "nouvelles acquisitions françaises" at the Bibliothèque Nationale, political reports of the "procureurs généraux" at the Archives Nationales; and the "Angleterre" collection and the "Thouvenal Papiers" at the Archives du ministère des affaires étrangères. Of the various collections of manuscripts he consulted, the documents found at the Public Record Office and the Archives du ministère des affaires étrangères were the most valuable. The reports of the British diplomats constitute one of the most important sources in existence for the history of this period. At the same time, the author discovered that the Archives du ministère des affaires étrangères contained manuscripts that furnished much pertinent information that had been hitherto unavailable.<sup>2</sup>

The writer has not only tried to use most of the manuscripts, books, monographs, and articles, but he also has endeavored to examine carefully the important

<sup>2</sup> The author was fortunate in obtaining access to the documents in the "Foreign affairs archives," inasmuch as the French authorities had only recently permitted scholars working in this field to use them.

newspapers and periodicals of this period. Such publications as the *Times* (London) and *Le Moniteur* (Paris) were consulted extensively. And other papers, especially the *Economist*, *Weekly Commercial Times*, and the *Banker's Gazette and Railway Monitor: A Political, Literary, and General Newspaper* (London), were found to contain some very valuable information. This official journal of the middle classes merits special consideration by scholars interested in economics and social history.

The materials mentioned above, as well as the documents and books cited in the footnotes, are valuable for other topics and phases of this subject and might well be used by students of this period in European history.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A number of theses have been prepared under the writer's supervision at the University of California. Particularly noteworthy are the following:

1. Cox, Frederick John. "English Public Opinion and Louis Napoleon, 1848-1852" (1940). Typescript, 120 pp.
2. Chatalbash, Robert Martin. "The Rise of a Modern Dictator" (1938). Typescript, 115 pp.
3. Moore, James Maxwell. "The French Constitution of 1846 and the Rise of Louis Napoleon" (1938). Typescript, 86 pp.
4. Payne, Howard Clyde. "The French Police as a Political Weapon of Louis Napoleon" (1941). Typescript, 148 pp.
5. Truex, Jewell. "Louis Napoleon and the Radicals" (1939). Typescript, 132 pp.
6. Twist, Dwight E. "Anglo-French Diplomatic Relations, 1848-1852" (1938). Typescript, 128 pp.
7. Wehrly, Herbert A. "The Establishment of the Second French Empire, 1852" (1938). Typescript, 113 pp.

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